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THE  
BRITISH PULPIT:

A COLLECTION OF

SERMONS

BY

THE MOST EMINENT DIVINES

OF THE PRESENT DAY.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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# THE PULPIT.

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## THE NATURE OF THE HEAVENLY REST.

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REV. J. SANDFORD, A.M.

LONG ACRE CHAPEL, JUNE 8, 1834.

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"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."—REV. xiv. 13.

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THE subject of the text, my friends, is surely interesting to us; it embraces considerations common to all; it comes home to every heart and bosom, and to it the sensibilities of all are certain to respond. Other topics will engage attention in proportion as they suit the individual bias; but this is sure, more or less, to affect all men. All know that they must die, and that according as they are found in death, will be their final portion.

We are all, therefore, susceptible of the impressions which the scenes and memorials of mortality effect: and these impressions are rather connected with a sense of our individual liability to the event which is recorded, than to any of the circumstances which may, or may not, accompany it, and invest it with an adventitious importance; such we mean as our previous acquaintance with the deceased, or the sight of the distress of surviving relatives, or the melancholy experience of external woe, or the awful solitude of the place of interment. In the receptacles of the dead, where the dust of many generations is contained, and wherever the eye wanders it lights upon some grim emblem of death, a sentiment of awe will be experienced, not necessarily connected with thoughts of our individual mortality: or when we are associated with a company of mourners at a funeral, and the sombre visage, and the whispered salutation, and the sable vestments, all indicate the sad occasion on which we are assembled, it may be difficult to determine how far our seriousness is attributable to the mere contagion of sympathy. But when we encounter death in the highways and thoroughfares of London, beneath the blaze and light of day, and with the scenes and the sounds of ordinary business and traffic around us; or when, in the crowded

the works which may authenticate your union with the Saviour, and go to swell and to regulate the amount of your heavenly inheritance. There must be labours in the Lord, or you cannot cease from them: there must be works, or they cannot follow you.

Here we would observe, by the way, what we are to understand by the expression "rest." Rest, my beloved brethren, is one of these delicious words, like "home," which speaks to the heart of every child of man, and describes the heavenly happiness: "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are *at rest*." Oh, how beautiful it is: and why? Because rest is not the portion of man in this sad world. Toil is our heritage while we linger here; and this in virtue of the curse pronounced on us at the fall, that we should eat bread by the sweat of our brow; the penalty involving weariness and toil, and appertaining to both mind and body. And we necessarily connect here in our present state, rest, with a previous state of painful labour. In short, rest is a contrast to what is felt to be an evil, and owes its chiefest charm to the fact that it is a contrast. If you talk to the husbandman or the mechanic of rest, the idea to his mind is that of cessation from acts of bodily servitude. If you talk of rest to the statesman, the professional man, or the student, or the tradesman, he too thinks of the relief from his wonted avocations. In every case the impression is that of quiescence and repose, as contrasted with fatigue.

Now in this respect we are to understand the rest of heaven as distinguished from our ordinary conceptions of the term. It implies nothing of an indolent relaxation; in fact, it is compatible with the most energetic exertions of the ethereal spirit and the glorified body. We shall find that the character of the paradisaical rest will serve, in a measure, to explain to us the nature of the rest in heaven. There doubtless was a time when labour was unattended with exhaustion, either mental or corporeal; when Adam's sleep was far different from the fevered or the leaden slumber of his children; and when rest did not involve the previous enduring of fatigue. The circumstance that Adam's frame, had he never sinned, would have been immortal, seems to establish this: for such labour as we poor sinners experience worketh death; and the most sinewy frame, and the most nervous intellect, will in time give way before it. Witness the premature decrepitude of some of our most athletic youth, and the manner in which the finest tempered minds soonest wreck the frame-work which encloses them. But man, in his original integrity, though actively employed, and though his paradise was not a scene of repose, but of joyous activity, was in a state of rest: and so will be the tenantry of that heavenly country; they will not sleep away their endless existence, but will find their rest, day and night, in serving God. The rest will consist, not in a cessation of exertion, but in a deliverance from the pains and sorrows of mortality, and from the outward temptations and inward corruptions which make, in this earthly state, the service of God a labour.

It is necessary to note this last particular, for otherwise the language of the text may seem somewhat equivocal: "They shall rest from their labour." What, it may be asked, are the peculiar and characteristic labours of the Christian now? His labour or his work of love to-day, is to serve God, to pre-empt his glory, to fulfil his will. Will he rest from these employments when he goes to heaven? If he labour now, even in an earthly state, in the labour of



love, when he goes to his home, will this glorious labour cease? The answer is, The work of love will not cease, but the impediments and weaknesses which obstruct the work, and render it labour, will. There is not an exertion which faith suggests, sweetened as it may be by the love of Christ, which is not at times, through the difficulties which it encounters, and the inborn corruption of our hearts, a labour. Ask you, the most devoted servants of God, the men of flaming zeal and unabating study, in the cause of heaven, if they do not find it a labour to maintain their consistency, and to run their course as Christians. Does not their service involve an agonizing with enemies without and within? Do they not often find the heat and burden quite overwhelming, were they not refreshed by the divine consolations, and upheld by an omnipotent hand? Does not every epithet that is employed to characterize the Christian in the Bible, distinctly involve the idea of labour, and that painful and agonizing labour? The Christian is *a warrior*: what does that epithet picture to the mind, but dangers, and conflicts—the sleepless watchings, and the wearisome marchings, and the deadly grapplings, with the foe in the skirmish and the battle? The Christian is *a wayfarer*, and as such, is serving God in a service which is perfect freedom; and yet we still see that toil, and that oppressive and painful, is implied in the epithets that we quote.

This illustration will, perhaps, explain the text. As far as the service of God is concerned, there will be no cessation of work, but on the contrary, a diligence, and an energy, and a perseverance in it, which none but the glorified can possibly exhibit. In our agency above, when ministering the divine behests, we shall be like a burning flame of fire; but the nature of our work will alter in all that constitutes it now a work of toil and anguish; for there will be no resistance offered from without, by man or devil, and no corruption stirring within, to harass or impede us. Therefore, observe, the rest from labour, implies no more than a relief from the opposition and weakness which render duty here a labour, and change in the nature of our work; inasmuch as we shall have no longer to crucify the flesh, and to restrain appetites, and to encounter persecution, and to put violence on our native dispositions; but all our services will be quite easy and quite spontaneous, and in perfect harmony with God; we shall find our happiness in obeying his behests.

The service of the Christian, my friends, in heaven, will, in nothing differ from his service while on earth, in this particular, that it will consist in obedience to the divine commands; but the command will not involve the labour of resisting corruption, for corruption there will be none in heaven; nor the labour of resisting enemies, for enemies there will be none in heaven; nor the painful sacrifice of personal inclinations to duty, for the very notion of a sacrifice involves the existence of a will not quite in accordance with the will of God. There will be no such shades of variance between God's will, and the will of his redeemed child in heaven.

It is this view, we conceive, which displays the real nature of the heavenly rest, which will shew us the practical character of our religion, and teach us, that the habits which are required for heaven, must be cultivated upon earth. Oh, it deeply concerns us to know what the happiness of heaven consists in, that we may individually ascertain our meetness for its enjoyments. The text discloses to us, that it will be a rest from labour, and, therefore, proves by

application, that the Christian labours here. The question then arises, in what respect the heavenly rest is to be considered a cessation from labour, which if it is suitable to the Christian here, must be in conformity with the will of God. The answer is, that the service of the Christian in heaven, will differ from his service on earth, only as it will involve no further conflicts with constitutional corruption, but consist in an obedience, easy, spontaneous, and delightful. It then becomes a matter of solemn consideration, how far *we* are now engaged in that service which is to discipline the soul for heaven. Do we know what Christian labours are? How else can we anticipate the Christian rest? Are we daily seeking a conformity with God's will, and consequently exercised in resisting the powers of hell? Are we labourers in the accomplishment of those works which are to go up as a sweet savour unto God at present, and will follow us as pledges of our security, and trophies of our triumphant entry when we die? If we are not so labouring, and have no mind to begin, we may not look to taste the rest of heaven. If we have no such works to follow us, and have no mind to set about them, where are the evidences to authenticate our oneness with the Saviour, or to regulate the amount of our eternal portion? Read the parable of the talents: does it not teach us what the religion of Christ claims from us—how our destiny will be in proportion to our personal labours, and how surely indolence and indifference involve guilt, and must entail punishment? In the august revelation, in our Lord's description of the final judgment, of the process by which the lot of each will be decided, who can fail to recognize a disclosure analagous to that of the text? What can be more emphatic than the reference there made to the personal labours, and works by which each has been distinguished? Or what can be more corroborative of the point in question, than the language of Paul in 2 Corinthians, v., where he declares, that "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad?"

We conceive that much is implied in the concluding words of the text; and that it is intimated in them, that the works which follow us, will not only establish in the celestial hierarchy our right to be amongst them, but also denote the very place we are to occupy in their graduated nobility. We know that among the principalities and powers that encircle the throne of God, there are gradations, and each rejoices in his station and degree. We should have gathered it from the analogy of nature, from the evidently purposed inequalities among men in the world, and from all we can conceive of the monarchical constitution of heaven: but it is a matter of express revelation; and we may infer from the arrangement of the angelic, and archangelic powers, that a like gradation will be observable in the ranks of "just men made perfect." We think there is nothing incompatible with evangelical doctrine in this view of the subject, and it furnishes a motive to each candidate for heaven, for augmented diligence in his Christian work. It would be in no degree inconsistent with humility that there should be this holy ambition, this god-like rivalry, among the disciples of Jesus, that each one of us should endeavour to labour to obtain a more abundant entrance into the kingdom of God.

But while insisting further on this point, it is not to be denied, that the text establishes the everlasting importance of those fruits which come of faith, and

that, if we would like to be blest in death, we must labour now, that we may have works to follow when we die. Our interest in Christ will be our only title to enter heaven: it is only in his righteousness, put on us by faith, that we can appear in his courts; but his righteousness imputed to us, is only a plea for heaven, not a qualification for its enjoyment. The proof that we are justified, is, that we have the Spirit of Christ in our hearts, and this Spirit will sustain us in the labours, and help us in the works, which are to prove that we are his disciples. In doing so, the Spirit will mould us to the pattern of the heavenly household, and the works which are hereafter to appear as our witnesses in heaven, will be the means of fitting us to appear there ourselves.

Are *you*, my brethren, fellow-workers with God, and of the household of faith? Are you conscious of a desire to live to Christ, that in death you may sleep in him? And has your conscience condemned you of no allowed sin? Is it your endeavour to abound in good works, and that for God's glory, as well as your own advancement in holiness? Let the text, then, stimulate you to a continuance in well-doing: in due season you shall reap if you faint not. The duties, and the services, and the sacrifices with which you are at present conversant, are intimately connected with your final portion. In your present state, your discipleship involves much that is painful, and much constraint must you put on natural inclination, and many a conflict must you wage with your spiritual enemies: but from all that is painful will you be relieved when you rest from your labours in death, for present trials will work out "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and your works of faith, and your labours of love, will follow you to your great account. Therefore, be ye instant in season, and out of season, in doing good. Grudge not a few sacrifices and exertions in your Master's service; they will yield to you a plenteous harvest. You may sow in tears for a while, but you shall reap in joy: and, though you may now go on your way weeping, yet, if so be you bear precious seed, you shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing your sheaves with you.

## INSTITUTION AND END OF THE SABBATH.

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REV. J. H. EVANS, A.M.

JOHN STREET CHAPEL, KING'S ROAD, NOVEMBER 25, 1827.

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"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it, he had rested from all his work which God created and made."—GENESIS, ii. 2, 3.

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ALTHOUGH wise, and good, and holy men, are, with very few exceptions, agreed, touching the obligation of the Lord's day, yet there does exist, notwithstanding, a great variety of opinion among us. Some appear, almost to legalize the Sabbath—they consider it in a Jewish point of view, and seem to rise no higher than the consideration of the fourth commandment. There are some who appear to go to something of an opposite extreme, and, as they are convinced the Jewish dispensation is null and void—that we are no longer under it—that we are free from that yoke of bondage, and yet, not only are we free, but have cause to rejoice in our liberty—so they appear to think, that every day is to the Christian a Sabbath, and that there is no command in the present day to God's saints, higher than the example that the Apostle gives in the Acts. There are some who ask us, What proof have you for the alteration of the day? And with regard to the obligation of that sort of service, which a Christian man is constrained to give it, there exists no small difference.

That this is a subject of much importance, must be evident to every thinking mind; because, a conscientious regard of this day, is connected with the institution itself. And if we look to the Sabbath on no higher grounds, than its being an institution of our country—of its being right and suitable in itself, without any express command of the Lord concerning it, then are we most certainly at issue on the subject: so that, the subject contains in it a vast body of truth. And when so many of God's people have differed about it—and immediately after the reformation, it was a subject that excited no little inquiry, and there was a long and severe controversy carried on by God's people on the point—remembering all this, how great need do I stand in, of the support and illumination of the Holy Spirit, that I may be kept from any fond and foolish conceits of my own knowledge; but that with all meekness, and yet, with all decision of mind, I may speak to you the things that I assuredly believe, and see recorded in God's sacred word.

Certainly, the fact is, there never was a period in which, while the saints of God are called upon to meet together from day to day, and express their allegiance to Him whom they allow to be their Lord and Master—never was a period in which greater profanation did take place, than at the present day. We have



had, at least, that evil brought over to us from the Continent—that is plain to any man who has resided in London ten years: he may see, every Lord's day, a great and increasing profanation of that day: he will see it in the unwillingly half-closed shutter: he will see it in the labour that men take to evidence this as their principle, "If shame did not prevent, this day should be to me as nothing; but because I am under some restraint of law and character, therefore I dare not do it." Who will not go through the streets and make this reflection as he goes? What man that has his eye on the Gospel view of the Sabbath—who that looks at Jesus as the great substance of this day, its beginning, its middle, its end, to whom the eye should be specially and peculiarly directed in his great work wherein he resteth—who that so regarded the cross of Immanuel, will not feel this, and suffer this persuasion to enter his mind as he passes our streets? I earnestly implore your prayers that God may give you and me a right and just spirit with regard to the subject.

Consider, first, who it was instituted the Sabbath; secondly, the continuation of that institution up to the present moment; thirdly, the great end and object of the Sabbath; and fourthly, what is that sort of obedience to it, which a Christian ought, under the spirit of liberty and adoption, to desire to give to it.

First, WHO WAS IT INSTITUTED THE SABBATH? When was it instituted? I said in the commencement, there are many who rise no higher than the consideration of the fourth commandment. Therein I think, with all affection and remembrance of my own weakness, therein I think they err. If that were so (though there were an argument springing out of that,) one might be led to consider, as we are not under the Jewish dispensation, how it is we know it to be the Lord's will, that that should be continued to us? But we find the early institution of the Sabbath in my text, before the fall of man. As the Lord ended his work on the seventh day (not that he worked, or completed his work, on the seventh day—it was finished on the sixth day—he had actually finished his work on the sixth day) as the Lord ended his work on the seventh day, he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: he caused it to be a day to which he had a peculiar favour, and he set it apart for a holy use, not to be used by him, but to be used for him, and set apart for all his creatures, for his own purpose, and for his own worship. Exodus, xxxi. 16, 17, "The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout her generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days," &c. It sets forth the divine complacency—how he looked back on the work he had finished, and how he was refreshed with the contemplation of it. And this gives us the true idea of the first Sabbath, when the Lord rested from his work: he set it apart, that his creatures might rest also; that they might rest in Him who accomplished it; that they might be taken from the work to the Worker, from the gift to the Giver, from the creation to the Creator, and from all the vast display it made of his perfections, to the contemplation of those perfections. He set it apart; it was his own act. If this be not the institution of the Lord's, whose is it? And if it be not his, we are as wrong as we should be, were we to blow the trumpet. It would be quite as absurd, quite an act of will-worship, for all the churches to acknowledge any obligation to meet once in seven days, or to abstain from any

work on the seventh day—it would be quite as much an act of will-worship, as to blow the trumpet in our pulpits. For, no one has a right, no, not the Apostles, to make laws—they were not legislators—we have but one legislator—not Paul, not Peter: we regard but one legislator, and that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have merely, the institution of our country, or if it merely springs from a consciousness of its usefulness and propriety, we seem to be as a ship without a compass. Without a personal demand on it, it would cease to be observed altogether. It seems evident to me, that the same God that rested on that day, took complacency in it. And although Adam had not then laboured, there was a delight in God, in the contemplation of the works of God—of that God whose work it was. Therefore, there was a great end of the Sabbath in him: for the cessation of bodily labour, is but a means to gain an end; which end is, contemplation, our rest in God, our admiration of the divine perfections, our complacency in him who had great complacency in his work.

It does appear a marvellous thing how any one can trace up the institution from Exodus, and not see that here it stands, laid down in man's state of primeval innocency. In that chapter, in which we read of the promised seed, there is as clear declaration of the institution of the Sabbath, as there is of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the promise of the coming seed is not clear, then this is not clear: if the one is clear, the other is quite as clear. God set it apart for himself, for a holy use, for the contemplation of, or the resting in that work in which God rested. And I desire you once more to remember the passing observation, that if the Sabbath had not the God of heaven for its institutor, we, at the present day, should be left without a clear precept; and all our observation of it would be but will-worship—the command of men, and not the command of God. It would be man's duty to oppose it, and to acknowledge, that there is no lawgiver but the great God of heaven and earth.

Secondly, observe, **THE CONTINUATION OF THE INSTITUTION.** It was instituted before man's transgression: and I have endeavoured to point out, what was the intention of it then. I do not say that the Christian Sabbath is not a more spiritual and sublime one. Many hints are thrown out, which prove that the patriarchs lived in the observation of it. When one has plain truth, it seems waste of time to go to a mere probable truth. From Exodus, xvi. 25, it is clear enough, that before the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, the Jews were living in obedience to that command. "And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field." Here was the gathering of the manna, and they were commanded not to gather it on the Sabbath day, because that was a Sabbath unto the Lord.

I need not remind you of its renewal in Exodus, xx., and *how* it is renewed. And there is one remarkable thing with regard to it—How comes it to be placed among the ten commandments? The commands are either positive or moral. A positive command is that which has nothing in itself that marks it to be right, but merely because God declares it to be so: but a moral precept is that which has its own suitableness within its own bosom. Now, see how that first commandment begins: "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Did the Lord bring his people out of the land of

bondage"—did that constitute the truth, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me?" It would have been just as true without that. His delivering out of the land of Egypt, did not make that true that was not true before. Why is it placed among the ten commandments? Why is it the Lord wrote them out on tables of stone? Why did he himself speak them to Moses? They were laid up in the ark, and nothing was laid up in the ark but these ten commandments, and these are but an extract out of the Law. It would have been just as true if there had been no Moses, no Mount Sinai, no house of bondage: true, because it has its truth in God himself, not at all connected with any circumstances of any kind; but true, because God had declared it from the beginning; because, though there is something positive in the setting apart of one day, yet there is something moral in it, because we are led by that law to give up ourselves to the Living God, to meditate on, and to delight in, his perfections, to give up ourselves to his glory. Though the appointing one day out of seven was a moral command, yet it was also positive: it was arranged in the garden of Eden before Satan tempted man to fall. Therefore it had its truth, not in Mount Sinai, not because Moses gave it, but from the Living God himself. And there it stands at an amazing distance from all ceremonies and all shadows. It sets forth a great truth, I allow—our rest in Jesus: but the setting apart a day of rest was no shadow; it was God's claim on his people. Your bodies are mine, your souls are mine, and you shall give what you owe to me.

Isaiah, i. 13, 14, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." Colossians, ii. 16, 17, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Those Sabbath-days, or feasts, or fasts, week-days, or month-days, or year-days, were called Sabbaths; and are spoken of repeatedly in the old dispensation. And the great jealousy of the Apostle was, their bringing in these things when Christ was the substance. Now, remember the previous observation, that the fourth commandment was but an extract out of what God gave to Adam; it has no more to do, as it regards its substance, than Moses has to do with your or my salvation: it has no more to do with the legal dispensation, as deriving its existence from the legal dispensation, than "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," stands on the foundation of the old dispensation. In Isaiah, lviii. 13, 14, we see the nature, as I consider, of the Christian Sabbath: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord:" not the mere drudgery, as you have done it: not the mere legal observance, as you have done it: but as honouring the Lord. It is remarkable that in Isaiah, lvi. 6, where the Prophet is speaking of the calling of the Gentiles, "The sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servant, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it," there is a continuation of the direction to look forward to the Sabbath of rest. In Matthew, xxiv., where our Lord desires his disciples to pray that their flight



might not be on the Sabbath-day, I think it would be forced did we say they were to keep the Jewish Sabbath. That would be establishing a thing destroyed—bringing them back to, and establishing the old dispensation on the ruins of the new. I cannot but think, that when Jesus told them their flight should not be on the Sabbath, that it had an especial allusion to the non-profanation of that day.

Acts, xx. 7, “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,” &c. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order unto the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him.” What right had Paul to give any order he had not received from his Master? He had no right to do it any more than you or I have. It would have been an act of usurpation in him. We know no legislator called Paul the Apostle: we have no lawgiver in Zion but the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have to observe, that it was commanded and appointed by the Holy Ghost; and that it was meant to be observed by all the saints of God to the end of time. We find the Church was in the habit of meeting together, and, as I believe, they met together every first day to break bread, and to make collection for the saints, and that by command of the Apostles, who acted under the command of the Lord, and the Lord Jesus Christ. And when I consider that the Lord Jesus Christ was dead on the Sabbath-day, as if to write death upon it, I consider it as a day of rejoicing: and consequently, the Jews’ Sabbath could not be a day of rejoicing. It was the day of his resurrection, and that was a day of rejoicing. John, xx. 19, “The same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, &c. came Jesus and stood in the midst.” There was a special honour put by him on that day, as if to write “dead” on the Jewish Sabbath; as if to point his disciples still to one day in seven; but on new principles, on rejoicing principles, on triumphant free-grace principles, on principles of liberty—holy, and yet most constraining liberty.

Acts, ii. 1, 2, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,” &c. In Leviticus, xxiii. 15, 16, you will find that this was the first day of the week also. Therefore *then* was the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the commencement of the new world, a new kingdom, a new day of rest established on better principles—no more the legal observation, but the joyous delight and constraint of the love of Christ, which we know, and are persuaded, and rest assured, and die upon it, is the only principle that ever did or can teach a man to love God, and to walk in his ways in that principle of child-like obedience, which is in his sight of great price—principle and motive being every thing with the Lord.

Here, then, we see a clear, unbroken chain of proof, from Genesis, ii. through the legal dispensation, through the prophetic declaration, in the Word of our Lord himself, and in the conduct of his Apostles: his own seal on the day, giving glory to the day; and himself sanctifying it to a better use than ever the first could be applied to. In all this, I think I see a clear and manifest proof of the continuation of the Sabbath-day—of the day of rest to the people of God.

Thirdly, Consider THE GREAT END AND OBJECT OF THE SABBATH. If I am asked where I am to find the true nature of the Christian Sabbath, I should

say, I find it in Hebrews, iv. 11: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest," &c. There is a great deal of involved argument in that chapter; it is hard to see the line of proof; it is hard to see the conclusion standing out of the premises; yet there seems to be this manifestly unfolded—there seems to be a rest in the fourth verse: that I think was the Sabbath immediately after the creation. And the Apostle declares that was not the rest. In verse 5, he speaks of the rest of Canaan: "If they shall enter into my rest." That was not the rest. Then he speaks of another; "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein," &c. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God"—as you find in the margin, "A keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God." Now, that points out the true nature of the Christian Sabbath. It points out the great propriety of what we call the Christian Sabbath. This was that Sabbatism, or keeping of the Sabbath, that remained to the people of God. It was not the Sabbath immediately after the creation; it was not the land of Canaan; but it is in the Gospel dispensation. This was the great argument the Apostle had in view; and I think he runs a parallel between God as the Creator, and God as the Saviour. And as, in the first, we find God resting in his work, having finished his work, and then setting apart a day, that all his creatures might enter into his rest—that is, the rest into which he entered, and find their rest in himself, having finished all his work; so, I think, he, as the Saviour, having finished his greater work, we, by faith, are called upon to enter into his rest. The argument is not, as I think many understand it, ceasing from our own works as he ceased from his works. Verse 10; many understand by "he that has entered into his rest has ceased from his works," that he has ceased from his own sins, transgressions, imperfections, and vileness, as God ceased from his works. But that cannot be the reason of it. God did not so rest from his works, for he rested in complacency: he looked back on them, and pronounced them to be good. He that is entered into his rest is Jesus, having finished his work, having gone up on high, having gloriously put the last stone, as it were, to the great work of redemption, he now ceases from his own works as the Creator ceased from his. He looks back on the work, on the great redemption work, and ceases from his work just as he did after he had finished the great work of creation; and looks on it with complacency. And just as in the old Sabbath, they were called on to rest in the work of creation, or rather in God that created, giving them up to his service—setting them apart for his use especially; so is there now an entering into that work into which the people of God are exhorted to enter by faith, in resting in the work of liberty in which he rested.

Now that there is a strong parallel between the two, you will see in Isaiah, lxxv. 17, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth," &c. Here is a new creation; ("If any man be in Christ he is a new creature")—a new dispensation, a new world, a new heaven, a new earth, a new creation accomplished. And in Isaiah, liii. 11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied"—there was his complacency in his work. He had finished it, he had accomplished it, he had laid the last stone to the work, and he was satisfied with it. And he calls on his people to be satisfied with that with which he was satisfied, and to find their rest in that in which he rested. This is to my apprehension the single, simple, and prevailing object of the Christian Sabbath.

This seems to include every thing. Just as the Creator did rest from his work, and did command his creatures to rest as he rested, giving themselves up to the contemplation of himself; so in the Christian Sabbath we are led by the Eternal Spirit to seek our rest, and to find our rest, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THAT OBEDIENCE WHICH OUGHT TO BE GIVEN TO IT BY CHRISTIANS. Let him beware of Jewish legality, of the spirit of bondage—of that principle which, while it seemeth as if it honoured God in strictness, strains at a gnat and swallows a camel. You and I, to obey one single principle aright, must have a right principle. It is in vain the command comes to us: it can work on us by authority and by terror; but we must have a higher principle to influence the inner man. The nature of the obedience is at once unfolded in the nature of the institution. Whatever has a tendency to promote my entering into that rest, to promote my spiritual acquaintance with that rest, enters of necessity into the consideration of the Christian Sabbath. Whatever has a tendency to hinder it, whatever has a tendency to prevent it, whatever has a tendency to chain me down to this earth, is to be avoided by a Christian man. We enter into it by faith. If we place our obedience first, and our faith afterwards, we might as well expect light without the sun, or any effect without its cause. The first Christian observance of the Sabbath is by faith—contemplation of the work of the Lord Jesus by faith. If a man has no real, inward, vital acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, he may get up in the morning at two—go to his prayers till twelve—he may fast, chasten his body, and kneel till his knees are worn, and he shall no more keep the Sabbath than if there were no such Sabbath. It is impossible for water to rise above its level by any power in itself; it is impossible for a Christian to keep the Christian Sabbath but as he has Christ in his heart the hope of glory. Till he becomes vitally acquainted with Christ—till there is a right apprehension of Christ by faith, there can be no rest in him.

Do not fall into the principles of the world: do not be calculating, and saying, these principles will lead to carelessness. That is just what the world says about our free grace. We say that the grace which brings salvation, and which comes to the poor sinner that worketh not—that that grace which unfolds salvation to a poor ungodly man, led to believe by the Eternal Spirit in the cross of Christ—that grace teaches him to the inmost heart. It purifies the heart. We say it influences his words, directs his conduct; so that whoever be the man that talks of faith, and his faith influences not the man, it is like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. We do maintain, the Christian man has principles peculiar to a Christian man. He is not to be urged by the principles that the world is urged by—he is to be urged by the principles of the Gospel. And I say to every natural man, who never prayed, You are an atheist in your heart. A carnal man cannot keep a Christian Sabbath, he knows not the nature of it, and knows not the obligation of it. But a Christian does and will feel a delight in it. In Isaiah, lviii. is pointed out one part of the Christian's obedience: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," &c. We have our pleasures: we tell you the Christian has his pleasures, and that one half-hour, one five minutes with his God is pleasure. When the Holy Ghost brings home the truth to his conscience, it is pleasure to him—and when the promises are

rooted on his heart, it is his chief pleasure—and when he can walk the streets and find his God is with him, he can say, such a pleasure is it that nothing can be compared to it. The very first idea a Christian man forms of the Sabbath is, that it is a day of delight and of rejoicing in the Lord, who on that day rose from the dead, and rising triumphantly, finished his great work. And by faith I would desire to have communion with him in it; I would desire to have this blessed union, and communion with him; that as he rests from his work, so would I rest in that in which he resteth.

The great end of the day should be *meditation*. I would avoid every thing that would lead me to a light and trifling spirit. The principles of the Gospel would teach a man to be more careful of his words, and of lightness of spirit. I would desire to keep this day as a holy day to the Lord, not doing my own pleasure, but his pleasure from my heart. I would account the great end of the day, to be accomplished in whatever leads me to contemplate the finished work of Jesus—public means, private prayer, reading the Word, spiritual communion, every thing that would tend to lead the soul to a contemplation of the work of Jesus. What a blessed opportunity for a man to turn in on himself: how often has the Lord blessed it; how often the Lord shows how he blesses his day after your six days' trouble and turmoil—shall I call it anxiety? You ought to be careful for nothing—the only thing you should be careful for, is, giving yourselves up to God, walking nearer to God.

But, after all the trying and vexatious circumstances that seem to surround you, what an opportunity you have on the Sabbath to turn in on the work of Christ. What a gracious thing it is, the Lord has set apart one day, for, if it were every day, it would be no day. We have one day. And how God has blessed it; how many have been added to the Church in it; how many have been brought to the dust in it; how many poor convicted souls have been raised up from the dust in it! Do not men, that live nearest to God, most value this day? Yes, they do, the constraint of the love of Christ, moving their hearts to a contemplation of what he has done and suffered. On this day, I would be free from every thing that would take me from the Lord Jesus Christ, from all needless occupations of every sort. Wherever necessity compels me I go, and I do the works of mercy; for surely, that great day of mercies, when the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, would lead me out to go and see his distressed saints. And as many of you have but little time in the rest of the week, may you be led to value it, and use it for such good purposes. And while there is a great and increasing profanation of the day, my prayer is, that it may be the peculiar mark of this congregation, of those that love God and his Christ, that they may be strict in the observance of it, but on the free-grace principles of the Gospel: but as it regards the bondage of obedience, may they consider it an enemy to all right obedience; and that, under the constraining love of Christ, they may be able to look forward to that blessed day of rest, that blessed peacefulness, that happy, happy prospect, that state where all the saints of God shall cease for ever from mourning, where they shall look back on the past, to find complacency in their own works.

May the Lord own his word, and apply it with power to the soul, and write what I have delivered on your hearts, as far as it is consistent with his truth; and if I have spoken any thing opposed to it, pardon, for Christ's sake. Amen.



## ANXIETY FOR SALVATION.

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REV. J. A. JAMES.

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"What must I do to be saved?"—ACTS, xvi. 30.

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SUCH was the inquiry of the pagan, who will rise in judgment at the last day, against millions who have been born in Christian lands. Awakened at midnight from his slumbers by the convulsions of an earthquake, fancying that he was feeling the very throes of expiring nature, seeing the abyss of eternity opening before him, and feeling upon his conscience a weight of unrepented, unforgiven sin, he exclaimed, with horrible apprehension of what was about to happen, "What shall I do to be saved?" What could he say otherwise? What can or what will any man say otherwise, when he feels that his foot is upon the very threshold of the unseen world? Ah, then, how the scenes that now interest, amuse, delight, will vanish, and one only anxiety will appear upon the spirit. "What shall I do to be saved?"

Never did the lips of man utter, never did the heart of man conceive, never did the mind of man imagine, a more momentous question than this. Were the very sun that is now setting in mild majesty and glory upon our earth in danger of being lost from the solar system, and we were this night agitating the question, how, by petitioning Jehovah, that luminary might be spared to us, it were a trifle, not worth a thought, compared with the question that forms the subject of discourse. The rise and fall of empires, the fate of nations, are nothing. God grant that in all seriousness we may ask it now, while a satisfactory answer can be given to it, lest we should put off the subject to futurity, and ask the question when no answer can be given!

In the first place, there is a deep solicitude which every man owes to God and to himself, in reference to his own personal salvation: and in the second place, there are just reasons why such solicitude should be felt.

**IN THE FIRST PLACE, THERE IS A DEEP SOLICITUDE THAT A MAN OWES TO GOD AND TO HIMSELF, IN REFERENCE TO HIS OWN PERSONAL SALVATION.**

you are each *one*, and only one, of a vast world of souls; but you are each *one*. You have the completeness, as well as the identity and separateness, of the immortal existence in yourselves. You are each pursuing his own path to eternity; you will soon go *alone* through the dark valley of the shadow of death; appear *alone* at the bar of God, amidst the solemnities of judgment. All that is grand and terrific will cause your own reflections to return with an

overwhelming tide upon your own spirits; and, as it has been observed, amidst surrounding millions you will stand apart; and if without religion here, you will mourn *alone*; through the countless ages of eternity, your own separate, vast, immortal interests, will be settled by the power and justice of God.

Think, then, of *yourselves*; take care of yourselves; be anxious about yourselves; and lose not yourselves in the crowd. Self-love, distinct from selfishness, if it be no virtue, is unquestionably no sin: it is your impetus to happiness, and, well-directed, even to virtue itself. You must care for yourselves—not, of course, to the opposition or neglect of the welfare of others; but the concern of the universe will do no good for you, if it do not stir you up to save yourselves; and the benevolence of more worlds than one will be lavished upon you in vain, if there be no anxiety for your own spirits. And upon what is it that a man should be chiefly anxious? Himself—for a man's *soul* is himself: the soul, the never dying soul, is that about which this solicitude should be felt. We are to be indifferent to nothing that belongs to us; our health, our property, our reputation, are all of some importance to us, and should be the objects of our solicitude. If a man lose but a piece of money, like the woman in the parable, if he cannot find it by other means, he must light a candle, and sweep the house, that he may re-possess himself of it. Nothing that belongs to a man that is valuable in itself, however diminutive is its value, should be regarded with total indifference. Oh, then, think what solicitude should be poured over the immortal interests of the immortal spirit. You should seek *your own* salvation.

I do not mean, of course, to throw myself between you and the exercise of that benevolence which you have been recently called upon to cherish with reference to the heathen world. But let me tell you, (and I tell you with perfect conviction and assurance of what I say,) that the damnation of the whole six hundred millions of immortal souls that are destitute of the Gospel, is nothing to you compared with your own salvation; that the salvation of the whole six hundred millions of immortal spirits that are yet without the knowledge of the Gospel, is nothing to you compared with the salvation of *your own* spirit. As I said before, I am not checking the ardour of your benevolence; sure as I am that proper Christian benevolence can only arise out of true Christianity in the heart and soul. To-night, brethren, I am pleading with you on behalf of *your own* souls. As I have already hinted, you have each an immortal spirit, as precious as any that can be found in the heathen world, that is the object of your kind regard. You are lost sinners; you are destined for eternity; Christ died for you as well as for others; you are invited to salvation: mercy to pardon, and grace to sanctify, are exhibited to you in the Gospel; and you ought to be anxious to obtain it: I say anxious, and I advisedly use the term.

This leads me to the second head of discourse, to advance REASONS WHICH JUSTIFY THIS ANXIETY FOR OUR OWN PERSONAL SALVATION. This will go to prove, that the man who dies in the neglect of it, with the faculties of a rational being, acts with an irrationality less than that of the brute; for brutes, by the power of instinct, provide themselves with the highest good of which their nature is susceptible: but man, rational man, who neglects the salvation

of his immortal soul, I say, with all the faculties of a thinking being, acts below the instinct of the brute.

Now, my brethren, I am preaching to you to-night upon the reasons why you should each be personally anxious for his own salvation: the first reason that justifies this anxiety is, *the value of that object on which it is bestowed.* The soul; that mysterious principle in a man's nature which is composed of intelligence, volition, reflection, sensation. I pass by the faculties of the mind to fix upon one of its attributes, which more especially comes under its consideration; and that is, its *immortality.* Immortality! it is a subject which the mind of a Newton could no more comprehend than the mind of a peasant. It is a fathomless abyss; we labour, and labour, and labour to comprehend it; but it is all beyond us. Between two finite periods, however great the disparity may be that exists, we can institute a comparison: we can compare a moment with a million of ages; but millions of ages cannot be compared with immortality. We may conceive of a total formed of a million of figures in breadth, if the mind were equal to it (which of course it is not), but this would be nothing to immortality—an existence that begins, but never, never ends, and never *approaches* to a termination. And that attribute which seems too vast for any but the Great God himself, is the attribute of the mind of each individual among you this moment. You are *all* immortal. You may be poor and illiterate, but you are immortal: you are in existence; and, as was lately said in this pulpit, you never can get out of it: you may dislike existence, and you may attempt to terminate it; but exist you *must.* Passing from world to world is only changing the scene and the mode of existence; but existence still continues, existence still goes on.

Oh, the never dying soul of man! What, possess this immortal soul, and not ask and urge, and never cease to ask and urge, until the question is satisfactorily answered, "What shall I do to be saved?" We look around upon the solicitude which men feel in reference to earthly objects—their houses, lands, health, friends; and we justify that solicitude up to a certain point: it is all proper in its place. What then should be the solicitude if a man really believes he is an immortal being, what should be the solicitude which the mind should cherish with reference to the immortal soul? Oh that I had ability (but who can have it?) to describe the folly—I go higher, *the madness*—I go higher still, *the madness a thousand times multiplied*, of that man who professes to believe that he is immortal, and who can find any thing on earth more important to him as a subject of attention and desire than the salvation of his immortal soul! If immortality could break in upon the human mind in all its grandeur and importance, the whole current of universal affairs would be immediately arrested; the din of business, the clamour of politics, the career of sensuality, the thunders of war, every inquiry that has engaged the mind of man, would all die away in silence, and we should hear nothing from every quarter, but the cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" In fact, if it were not for the partial ignorance in which we live, and must live, of the full comprehension of immortality, if it were not that it were hidden, and must be hidden, from us in some manner, the human mind, in all its energies and all its pursuits, would be prostrate, would be crushed, under the weight of that term—or, rather, the idea that it is intended to convey. Oh, my dear hearers, is this



true? Is it a fact? If so, what then should we say of those who are caring nothing about immortality, who are utterly regardless of the salvation of their immortal souls?

The second reason which justifies this solicitude, is, *the concern which others have manifested about our souls.* Why the whole moral universe has been drawn into a fellowship, and sympathy, and concern, for the immortal soul of man: voices come to us from every part of the universe, which seem to unite in the inquiry, "What shall be done for the salvation of man?" This was the object that occupied the mind of Deity from eternity; for, from eternity, God foresaw the fall of man, and from eternity, determined upon his redemption. Redemption was no after-thought of God, no hasty expedient to gather up the shattered fragments of the first broken system, and bind them into something like harmony just upon the emergency: no; it was all foreseen, and all provided for. What was it brought the Son of God from the throne of heaven to the cross? And what was it that induced Him, who had the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, to make himself of no reputation, and to take upon himself the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, to humble himself, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? The salvation of man. For what are all the miraculous agencies of the Holy Spirit granted? To attest that Volume which is the basis of men's hope, and the object of man's faith. For what purpose did the finger of inspiration write the Bible, and the arm of Providence defend it? The salvation of man. Why did patriarchs live, and priests minister, and prophets predict, and Apostles preach? For the salvation of man. What are angels gathered for over this assembly to-night, invisible messengers of mercy, for what purpose are they here? To carry back the intelligence to the celestial world, if your salvation to-night should furnish an instance of another sinner repenting of his transgressions, born of the Spirit of God, and starting in the course of eternal life and eternal happiness. Yes, and if there should be a penitent to-night, (God grant that there may be many) though that penitent be a pauper, or a child, those angelic spirits will carry back the news; and in heaven, after every saint and every seraph has listened to the intelligence, they will break forth into new raptures of delight, and new acclamations of praise. Oh, then, must there not be something vast in salvation, that should draw together these holy beings, into fellowship, and sympathy, and concern, for man's salvation? And will *you* alone remain in a state of torpor and insensibility, though the very centre of this universal concern for you? What, when others are asking, "What shall be done for their salvation?" will you not take up the language of the text, and say, "What shall *I* do to be saved?"

In the third place, see another reason to justify this anxiety, and to condemn those who do not indulge it: *consider what the salvation or the damnation of the soul includes.* I am not asking you to concern yourself about trifles; I am raising you out of the region of trifling; I am presenting objects to your attention worthy the faculties of your minds. I am not calling you to be anxious about that which will not repay your solicitude. I dwell for a moment on that vast word—*salvation.* Authors have been writing, and preachers have descanted upon it for thousands of years, and they have left it just as they found it—one word, but millions of ideas! Just for a moment or two think what it

includes. The pardon of all your sins, however numerous, aggravated, or long continued; the justification of your person, so as to stand completely acquitted at the bar of God, a just and holy God; your adoption into the family of Jehovah, and a spirit of sonship connected with it: the renovation of your fallen nature, the sanctification of your heart and life, the renewal of your conscience; consolation in affliction; assurance that all things work together for good; hope in death; the resurrection of the just; life everlasting; a blissful heaven made up of the presence of God in Christ; communion with the invisible; communion with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; the light of perfect knowledge, the glow of perfect love, the rapture of perfect felicity: and all this for ever and for ever. This is *heaven*, so far as the Word of God has revealed it to our view. The question to-night is, "What shall I do to gain heaven?"

Turn to the opposite of this. What is *hell*? The loss of all happiness; a dreadful hell itself, if the loss were simply attended with immediate and eternal annihilation. But there is no such word as annihilation in the Bible; and it is a problem yet to be solved, whether there is any such act in reference to the particles of matter in the government of God: so let not the sinner cheer himself with the thought, that if he reach not heaven, he shall lie down in the slumbers of eternal night. Hell is the loss of heaven, but it is a state of conscious existence; it is a state of prolonged death—a living death. Hell means banishment from the presence of God, consignment to that dark world where hope never enters, and mercy is never seen; the everlasting endurance of the wrath of the Eternal; the bitterness of remorse; wretchedness and despair: and all this, too, for ever and ever. It is said of a tyrant, whose name is distinguished upon the page of history for inveterate cruelty, that he found out a new mode of punishment for criminals, by ordering a dead corpse to be chained to the living body of a felon, leaving him unrelieved by pity, unsustained by food, to wander with this body of death upon him, until by starvation, and suffocation, and infection, he should miserably perish. All this seems to me but a kind of emblem of the punishment of the wicked in another world. There will be the living principle of the soul, but there will be the body of moral death, chained to that living principle: and the soul will thus wander through eternity, a living body, united to the death of every thing that constitutes its happiness. Now what shall we do to be saved from this? Oh, my dear hearers, this is the question, What shall we do to be saved, so as to gain heaven and to escape hell?

Fourthly, another reason which justifies this solicitude is, *the soul of every man until he repents, and believes in Christ, is actually in a lost state, although not irrecoverably lost.* You have no need to ask, what will bring the soul into a state of death and condemnation: it is done already. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them:" "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." So that you are already in a lost state. This is fearful. You have sinned; you have broken the commands of God; you were born in sin, you have grown up under the power of original sin; and, you have willingly suffered it to develope itself in innumerable actual transactions. This is your state as sinners; you are under the terrors of the law, and exposed to the wrath of God. Sin is not that

trifle which men imagine: sin is an infinite evil: it violates infinite obligations; it is committed against a Being of infinite perfections, and disturbs a series of moral dependencies all but infinite. The evil of sin none can comprehend, but that Infinite Mind against whom it is committed. It is unnecessary to ask about *the degree* of your sins: we are all sinners enough to be exposed by transgression to the wrath of God; and surely, then, it becomes you to ask, What must I do to be saved from the consequences of sin? How shall I be delivered from the guilt which sin has brought on my conscience, so as to avoid the dominion of sin here, and the punishment of sin in the world that is to come?

Fifthly; another reason which justifies this anxiety is, *the multitude of souls that are irrecoverably lost*. Such is the loss of the soul, that if it occurred but once in a century, it is so tremendous a catastrophe, that it should awaken the solicitude of the whole world of souls that may be exposed to this fearful end. And that man must be guilty of the greatest folly, who can go on in reckless security, even under the very possibility, that he may be that one in a century who might thus perish eternally. How much more, then, should we be anxious, when, instead of its being an *uncommon* thing for souls to be *lost*, it is a *much more* uncommon thing for souls to be *saved*.

I know that in this age of liberalism and of false candour, a man goes a considerable length towards hazarding his reputation for charity, in giving utterance to such a sentiment as this; but it is a Scriptural one. Our blessed Lord has told us, that the broad high-road that leadeth to destruction, is crowded, while the narrow path that leadeth to eternal life, hath but here and there a traveller. I have high authority, then; I have no need to shrink back from the sentiment, when I find it on the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is, I again repeat it, in every age, in every age that has ever occurred, a far rarer thing for men to get to heaven, than for them to get to the bottomless pit. I do not know a sentiment that has been more withering, and fatal to the interests of mankind, than the supposition that it is a *rare* thing for the soul to be *lost*. It is high time that all who are the preachers of the Word of God, and all who are appointed as watchmen of the Lord for men's souls, should endeavour to destroy that delusive idea, and break in on the repose into which men have fallen under its influence, by sounding in their ears, that the broad road to destruction is crowded, while the narrow path to life hath but here and there a traveller. It is more than possible, it is more than probable, it is all but certain, that not only some, but many of this congregation, will spend their eternity where streams of mercy never flow, and words of salvation are never heard. If there was but *one* individual in this assembly that would thus be eternally lost, and that individual was put forth in the view of the whole congregation, could we bear the sight? No; we should ask to be spared so fearful a demonstration of the divine justice as that exhibition of a lost fellow-creature. But, though we know not the individual, it is more than possible, or probable, that there are many such here. And it would be no wonder, were some that hear me to-night to be in everlasting destruction before this year is out; yea, it would be no wonder if they were there before to-morrow's sun-rise. In such circumstances as these, my hearers, shall we be careless; shall we not ask the question, "What shall I do to be saved?"

I mention only one more reason to justify this anxiety, and that is, that *this*



*loss of the soul may yet be averted, and this salvation secured.* It were perfectly useless to talk to men of miseries which cannot be remedied, or excite them to the pursuit of benefits which never can be obtained. If it were possible to visit the lost souls in prison, humanity would require that we should never put there such a question as this—"What shall I do to be saved?"—because their salvation is impossible. To sound salvation in the ear of a lost soul, is adding venom to its misery; it is giving an additional sting to its punishment; the very sound is torment to the man who had never obtained this blessing. But this is not *your* case; you are not in the situation of the man sinking in the water after the vessel has foundered, who rises on the waves, and feels a consciousness, that if he is not submerged by that, another, and another, and millions more in endless succession, are following him, and therefore in hopeless despair gives himself up to his fate without a struggle. *You* are in that world where mercy reigns; *you* are in that world where all the opportunities of salvation, and the means of grace are continued. God waits to be gracious: a beseeching, loving, Saviour still throws open the arms of his affection, and invites you to hide there; the Holy Spirit still offers his gracious and efficient energies for the illumination of your mind, the renovation of your heart, the sanctification of your life. Every thing that constitutes salvation is placed within your reach: and it is the preacher's delightful business to-night, though he has talked of the loss of the soul, to tell you that salvation is still to be obtained. You ask the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" And I am commissioned to reply in the language of the Apostle, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Would I talk to you of salvation, as I have already hinted, if salvation were not to be obtained? Would I come here to torment you before your time? If I could not tell you of the means of averting that damnation which is unto eternity, I would let you go quietly to perdition; I would rather utter dulcet sounds that should soothe you during the few fleeting years that you have yet to endure, all the comfort that you would ever enjoy. But, when I know that there is salvation in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory for all who ask it; oh, when I see the page of the Gospel open before me, where I am actually *commissioned* to tell you that the blood of Christ will cleanse from all sin, that his righteousness will justify the greatest sinners in this assembly; when I see the gates of heaven rolled back upon their everlasting hinges, and hear voices coming down from the celestial world, from redeemed spirits, saying to you, "Come up hither;" oh, should I not be a wretch that deserved to be banished from the pulpit, and cast out of your assembly, if I did not do all that mortal mind, and heart, and language can do, to impress you with the idea of the dreadfulness of the loss of the soul, and the greatness of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus?

My brethren in human nature (for you are all my brethren in this respect: would God, as I hope that I am a Christian, that you were all my brethren in Christ) I invite you to this privilege, this blessing. Do take up to-night the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" For there is salvation for you in Christ Jesus: and if you die thus, it will not be because there is no Saviour, but because you do not seek him. Come to him to-night: he stretches wide the arms of his affection; waits—more than waits—entreats, beseeches; for the Apostle speaks of his entreating and beseeching in Christ's stead. Oh, this mercy—this infinite mercy! That the infinite should entreat the finite! That

the divine should beseech the human! That the holy Saviour should thus bow himself down, and beseech thee, sinful mortal, to come to him and be saved! Is there any enthusiasm, then, in a man's being all anxious about the salvation of his soul? Is there anything irrational? Does not the irrationality lie on his part who careth not for these things?

To come to the conclusion, I would first take up the subject by way of *examination*. How many of my hearers are there, who from the dawn of reason up to the present moment, have never once, with seriousness and solemnity, taken up the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Do not many of you know that this is your state? The question on almost every other subject has escaped your lips, and meditations on every other theme have been in your mind; you have said, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed? What connexions shall I form? Where shall I reside? What business or profession shall I choose?" But your anxiety never perhaps has travelled on from these things that are seen and temporal to the things which are unseen and eternal. And up to the present hour, is there a human being that can testify that he hath ever seen you with the impressions of holy seriousness upon your countenance, or ever heard you give utterance to holy expressions from your lips, similar to that in our text? Nay, has the Omnipotent and Omniscient God ever seen any such anxiety in your mind? What! a rational being, that admits he is immortal, that confesses he is going on to eternity, that does not know he has another hour to live, who may be the next morning found a corpse—what! such a man forgetting his immortality, caring nothing about salvation, never inquiring what he is to do to be saved? Oh, as Baxter said, "Can he be a man or a brute?" And yet we know him to be such: if he were a brute it would be better for him, for he would be without responsibility; but it is his being a *man*, that makes *his* case fearful; for it is that very rationality that constitutes his responsibility.

Now, my dear hearers, is not this the case with you? May I not be speaking to many to-night who have been recently at missionary meetings, professedly to seek the conversion of the heathen, the salvation of distant nations, who have never cared about *their own* souls? May I not be speaking to many missionary collectors, that go from house to house to gather the humble offerings of the poor, or the more munificent ones of the rich, who are giving themselves all this trouble, but have never yet been brought to conviction of sin, to faith in Christ, to true repentance and conversion? Now let conscience speak, my brethren, I could have chosen other subjects, but God is witness, that thus far the preacher has striven to select a subject by which he could hope to do good; and therefore I do entreat you, go with me into this interrogation. I beseech you, enter into the design of him who speaks to you to-night, and who is anxious to make your conscience the preacher, and anxious to make that inward monitor respond to the words spoken from without. Is it not the case, that you have neglected the salvation of your souls? I do not ask if you have never repeated the words; I do not ask if you have never had some passing ideas in your breast; but have you ever seriously taken up the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" You *know* you have not.

Let me then expostulate with you, in the language of St. Paul, when he says,

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Neglect! you *may* not probably be aware of the sin of neglect; you have not opposed this salvation, probably, by a vicious life, by the blasphemies of infidelity; but you have *neglected* salvation. This is the question. "How shall we escape if we *neglect* this great salvation?" Consider the sin there is in this neglect. It is an insult to all the attributes of God, that are manifest in this salvation. It is rebellion against the authority of Jehovah, who has stepped in, and, unwilling that you should perish, made it even your *duty* to believe and to be saved. It is an insult to the mediatorial character and office of Christ. It is ingratitude for the favours, not merely of nature and Providence, but of grace; the vilest ingratitude that can be committed by earth or by hell. It is a reckless indifference to your own welfare; it is being guilty of the worst and most guilty of all suicidal acts; and all this for those perishing possessions and evanescent pleasures, which you know not but may be taken from you the next moment. See the sin of neglecting salvation. How *shall* we escape? The Apostle does not answer the question; he could not; it was not given him to answer. The silence which seems to follow, fills my imagination with more terror, as to the doom of the impenitent and unbelieving, than the most lengthened and impassioned description of their torments. How shall we escape? A question which implies, that the punishment of unbelief is indescribable, unavoidable, eternal!

Let me, then, now entreat you my hearers, again to ask whether the sin of this neglect does not lie at *your* door? Let me ask, whether it shall lie there *any longer*. Oh, to-night, *to-night*, take up the question, carry it away with you, "What shall I do to be saved?" Carry it in silence to your own habitation; let no conversation by the way divert your attention from it. Find your way to your closet, open your Bibles, throw yourself upon your knees, and if you have not prayed before, let the voice which welcomed the supplications of the murderous Saul of Tarsus to heaven, be heard welcoming yours, and saying, "Behold, he prayeth." God dispose your hearts to this, and for your encouragement know, that no prayer of the penitent, no prayer of faith, was ever rejected by God. If he could not listen at the same moment to the concert of redeemed spirits in heaven, and the prayer of the penitent on earth, he would hush every harp in glory for a season, that he might let the cry of mercy come up into his ear. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

## THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY TO IMPROVE THE TEMPORAL CONDITION OF A PEOPLE.

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ALL SOULS' CHURCH, LANGHAM PLACE, JUNE 15, 1834\*.

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"Righteousness exalteth a nation : but sin is a reproach to any people."—PROVERBS, xiv. 34.

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It is our wish, on the present occasion, and as introductory to an appeal on behalf of the National Schools of this District, to set before you the power of Christianity to improve the temporal condition of a people. We are quite aware that this is not the most commanding point of view under which Christianity can be surveyed, seeing that it is as the alone guide to immortality, that the religion of Jesus appears most illustrious. But if it be true, that "righteousness exalteth a nation," so that a thoroughly evangelized community occupies on account of its piety a more dignified station than the ignorant and irreligious, Christianity stands commended to every class in society; and the Scriptural education of the poor proves itself worthy the support of all who call themselves philanthropists.

We are far from sure, that the present advantages conferred by Christianity on a nation obtain their due share of notice; or rather, we fear that they are for the most part overlooked. It certainly follows, from such assertions as this of our text, that thoroughly to Christianize a community would be to cover the land with contented, yea, and in a moral sense, honourable families. If there be an exalting power in righteousness, it cannot be denied that we have in Christianity such an engine for the amelioration of the human condition, as is just fitted to exchange the present fearful mass of wretchedness for the beautiful spectacle of virtuous and well conditioned households. Such an exchange is in no sense visionary; but we are sure it will never be brought round, and we shall make none but the most inconsiderable advances towards that condition, so long as we try any method but that of impregnating our people with the religion of the Gospel. It may be an applauded theory, that religion should be dissociated from legislation; as though it were beneath statesmen to take lessons from the Bible: but never would a country be so near the summit of greatness, and never would its families be so approaching that high standard of respectability and sufficiency, as when ruled in the fear of God, and on the simple principle, that the effective power for making men sober, and industrious, and honest, is to make them zealous for the salvation of the soul.

We shall endeavour, in the first place, to demonstrate, the existence of that power, which Solomon, in our text, has ascribed to righteousness: in the

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\* On behalf of the District National Schools.



second place we will meet the objection which seems to lie against his statement, drawn from the discord to which Christianity has given rise. The whole subject will apply itself to the charitable cause which solicits your support ; for if we shall prove that Christianity heightens the condition of the lower orders, who will refuse to aid the Christian education of the poor?

In the first place, then, we are to advance certain general considerations which shall shew **THE BENEFICIAL POWER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**; righteousness being regarded as the produce of Christianity. We desire to prove of our religion, that it vastly elevates the condition, and augments the present happiness of mankind: and if you will give your attention to the influence which Christianity exerts, first on *the duties*, and secondly on *the trials* of life, you will admit this, and assent readily to the proposition, that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation.

Now if you know any thing of the precepts of the Bible, you must be aware, that if these precepts were acted out by the members of a community, there would be banished from the circle of this community whatever tends to produce discord and strife, and that nothing would be more observable than the anxiety and the endeavour to uphold order, and promote the general happiness. If a man be imbued with the fear of God, he has a principle which must accompany him into all the intercourse of life, and exert an influence over each portion of his conduct. Teaching us that to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world; that we obey magistrates; that we render to all their due; custom to whom custom is due, tribute to whom tribute, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour; is it not evident that the Gospel, if cordially received would turn the refractory into the orderly, the dissolute into the virtuous; and that just in the degree in which it made way in a nation, the institutions of that nation would be consolidated, its strength increased, and its prosperity augmented? Let the Gospel of Christ find its way into a cottage where there is a thief or a drunkard, and it presently plies this unhappy man with engines peculiarly its own. It does not enlarge, as might philosophical treatises on morality, on the comforts of sobriety, and the advantages which result to society from holding sacred the rights of property: it assumes at once higher ground; it tells the man of his deathlessness; it pours out against him the denunciations of his Maker; it declares that the practices of his life are making sure to him an eternity of torment: and when the man stands aghast at the spectacle of his condition, filled with dread at the consequences of his actions, and yet feeling himself so hampered by evil habits, that he can scarcely form *resolution* to amend, then the Gospel comes in with encouragement. It speaks to him of a Surety who has died in his stead; of a sanctifying agency which is ready to make his own breast the scene of its operations; and thus assuring him, that he has not sinned beyond the reach of mercy, and that he may obtain superhuman help in wrestling with the corruptions of nature; it animates him to the work of renovation, and moulds him into the orderly subject, the respected and trust-worthy neighbour. Or if again, we take one of those poor children for whom we are this day to plead, we say of him, that through receiving into his heart the truths of the Bible, he will learn to be obedient to his parents, and content with such pittance as their condition affords him: and as he grows up,



the wisdom which is given him will lead him to the shunning every course of vice and dishonesty, to the working with his own hand the thing which is good, to the bearing with meekness the pressure of straitened circumstances, and yielding respect to all that are in authority: while in every poor child that is made truly religious, there is secured to the commonwealth an industrious, honest, and contented member; one who shall be exemplary in the several duties of his station, a loyal subject, a faithful friend, and an affectionate relative: he will live *as one who knows that he must die*; and this brief description comprehends all that is estimable in conduct. And what shall we say of the country, concerning which it is said, that the work of righteousness was fast going on amongst its youth, but that it were just rising to the zenith of greatness—that a period was at hand when an unwonted peace, and a rich contentment, if not plenty, will pervade all its families, and there will be given a public demonstration, that it is “righteousness which exalteth a nation.”

Oh, we cannot tell you what a cheering thing it is to the Christian philanthropist, after looking with weariness on the well-meant, but inadequate schemes, which politicians propose for ameliorating the condition of the people, to turn to the religion of Jesus, and observe how the introducing it into every household would scatter the worst causes of national unhappiness. It is a proof, susceptible of almost mathematical demonstration, that such is the power which Christianity directs towards the discharge of the duties of life, that in prevailing on a man to seek the salvation of his soul, we bind him to all those virtues with which the well-being of states is indissolubly associated. A parish of real Christians must be a parish of loyal subjects, united families, and industrious labourers: overspread the country with such parishes, and in its length and breadth it will present nothing but order, and contentment, and activity, the main elements of national happiness and national aggrandizement. So that, when we would endeavour to improve the extent of our population, by employing no direct bearing on its spiritual interests, we put away from us the sovereign specific which God has revealed, and can expect nothing but disappointment from the application of remedies which we ourselves have devised. We begin at the wrong end, when we address ourselves *first* to the temporal interests. Give the supreme concern to eternity, and in proportion as you awaken attention to this, you will find improvement pervading the temporal. And if there be truth in these assertions, it follows that you heighten the condition of the people by heightening the tone of their religion—that, so long as no attack is made on their sinfulness, you leave them under a degradation not to be hidden by the splendour of warlike achievements, nor balanced by the fame of scientific discoveries; and that thus our text is borne out to the very letter—“Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.”

We have, however, as yet only spoken of the influence exerted by religion on *the duties* of life: we shall understand more thoroughly the worth of Christianity as an engine for improving the condition of the poor, if we briefly consider the influence of religion on *the trials* of life.

Now, there is a standing witness to the divine origin of the Scriptures, in the correspondence between the Word and the wants and consciences of the readers. It matters not what may be my condition, or of what uncertain and unlooked-for revolutions I may be the subject; let me only be in the habit of

appealing to the Bible for counsel and encouragement, and I shall always find a word in season, some text which appears written, as it were, on purpose for myself, the thought of one who knew all about me, and who foresaw exactly the message I should need. And certainly that Book must commend itself to me as the work of the Omniscient which thus meets my own case, as though constructed with distinct reference to every case, and every difficulty, and every exigency, in the long and varied career: and I gather from the nicety with which Scripture fits into conscience, and from that intimate converse which it holds with all the emotions of the heart, that He who made conscience his vicegerent, and gave the heart its thousand strings, must be the very Being who spake to the world through prophets and apostles.

Now, if the Bible thus prove its divinity by its adaptation to all the circumstances of human condition, you will at once admit, that the religious man has a vast advantage over the irreligious man, however in temporal respects the superiority be with the latter. The poor cottager finds in the promises and announcements of Scripture, a mighty counterpoise to all the troubles by which he is oppressed. The instant that he recognizes the appointment of his heavenly Father, in the penury with which he has to wrestle, there is given, as it were, a dignity to want, which causes it to appear even preferable to abundance. Taught to walk by faith, and not by sight, he can maintain his serenity amid the gathering of all that seems adverse; so that if sickness be added to poverty, and there come that accumulation of trials, which one often sees in the hovels of our labourers, the wife or the children pining away under lingering disease, and the diminution of always scanty resources, and they have not what they need; even then he holds fast his assurance that "all things work together for good," and thus is more than a match for the calamity which seems taking his household by storm. We are sure that if you made it your business to search into the experience of the poorest Christians, you would find that the lessons and promises of the Bible, thus serve as more than a balance to the toils and trials of life.

In an extraordinary manner, Christianity adapts itself to the circumstances of the poor; and we shall not hesitate to say, that the amount of temporal happiness introduced into the lowest family by making it religious, far exceeds what will follow on making it rich. It is not that religion will exclude want and remove trouble; though it must not be overlooked, that we generally find the religious family more thriving, just because those vices will be unknown, and those virtues cultivated, which respectively obstruct and promote the prosperity of a household. But if religion augments not the substance, it communicates contentment; and the poor man, contented with his poverty, is a far happier and more dignified being, than the rich man, restless and dissatisfied in his abundance. This it is which Christianity does for the poor: it does not substitute the luxurious banquet for the bread and the water, but it makes the family feel, that the bread and the water are more than they deserve, and as much as is for their good; and this gives a relish to the scanty fare which would make it unwillingly exchanged for the lordly feast. Christianity does not diminish the labour for the obtaining the livelihood, but it sends man to work in the strength of his God, and thus so braces him for exertion, that the demand upon his energies seems lightened. Christianity does not prevent the entrance of sorrow,

but it produces such submission to the will of a wise and compassionate Father, as lessens the burden, and causes it to be felt as intended for good. Christianity does not shield from death, nor secure its possessor from long-continued disease; but it shews death despoiled of its sting, and the grave of its victory; and so nerves for the last conflict, as to take away its terrors. And if Christianity effect all this, where will you find us the engine by which so much may be done towards improving the human condition? What will introduce so general a contentment? What will so augment the sum total of happiness? What will ease so many hearts? What will dry so many tears, scatter so many anxieties, excite so many hopes? What will apply a helping power to the oppressed and suffering, as with wearied spirits, and overtaken strength, they grapple with hardships—animating to patience, and even inspiring them with thankfulness. Oh, it will be to improve the condition of our peasantry, to banish murmuring and discontent, to exchange uneasiness and anxiety for quietness and confidence, to provide an antidote to evil in its worst shapes, to furnish a never-failing succour of care, an inexhaustible source of consolation, a guide that will never deceive, a hope that will never make ashamed. Thus an improvement is effected in the exact degree that Christianity is diffused. Religion has such a power of softening what is most rugged, and enlightening what is darkest, and sustaining under the heaviest pressure, and directing in the most perplexing circumstances, that, as nothing can supply its place, so its possession more than compensates every other want. He that has it, may be said to be wealthy in his poverty, and he who is without it to be a beggar in his abundance: and believing that God has distributed the allotments of life more equally than is generally thought, so that the greatest cares accompany the greatest advantages, and thus the average of comfort may be not far from uniform—we believe not that any thing but religion is wanting to raise the very lowest to respectability and happiness. It were vain to talk of covering the whole land with opulent families; neither, if it were done, should we have it covered with happy families: but it is not less vain to talk of covering the land with contented families: this it is that Christianity, operating wonderously on all the trials, as well as all the duties of life, is both designed and adapted to effect. Let, therefore, Christianity gain entrance into the cabins and hovels of our country, and there will presently break upon the lower orders that golden age, which has yet only existed in the dreams of poets. The poorest, feeling themselves heirs of God, yea, joint-heirs with Christ, will bear cheerfully the afflictions which are “but for a moment;” and those who have to struggle with trouble in its most appalling forms, “knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope,” will present the aspect of undismayed, and even rejoicing men, not to be overborne, because sustained from on high, not to be disheartened, because secure of immortality. And if Christianity, admitted into the homes, and woven into the hearts, of the peasantry, would thus elevate the poorest families, and ensure them as large a measure of happiness as consists with a state of moral discipline—then the opposite proposition must also be true, namely, that the wealthiest families, void of religion, want the chief element, whether of honour or of happiness, and thus the proof supplied corroborates the assertion, that “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”



We go on to observe that there seems to lie AN OBJECTION AGAINST THE FOREGOING CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE DISCORDANCES TO WHICH CHRISTIANITY HAS GIVEN RISE.

We have endeavoured to show of Christianity, that it vastly augments the present happiness of mankind ; and appearances are, in some respects, against such a theory. We most frankly admit, that, not indeed from its own tendency, but from the opposition of the nature with which it comes into contact—Christianity has, all along, been the occasion of much disquietude and unhappiness. In this respect it only fulfils the prediction of its Founder, who declared, that he came not to send peace, but a *sword*, upon the earth. The persecutions to which Christianity has given rise, the family dissensions, the breaches which even now are made in an irreligious household, if one of its members dare to be careful for the soul—these are all exemplifications, that Christianity has acted, and still acts, as a sword among men. We again say, that the fault is not chargeable on Christianity, whose nature is emphatically peace, but solely upon man, who perverts God's best blessings.

But we must, of course, admit the fact, that much misery has been occasioned by the Christian religion, and that, had this religion gained no footing in a land, there are many forms of disquietude which its inhabitants would altogether have escaped. It is our business, however, to strike a balance between the produced wretchedness and the produced happiness, and to determine for or against the exalting power of Christianity, according to the side on which the preponderance lies. And we do marvel that so fruitful a topic of Christian advocacy, as that of the immense blessing which the religion of Jesus has proved to mankind, viewed simply in its temporal capacity, should not be more frequently handled by the champions of our faith. We are ready to keep futurity out of view, with its angust and terrible mysteries: we will not meet the arraigner of Christianity, on the ground from which he must instantly be driven—that of the developments of immortality, which can be found only in the pages of Scripture. We will confine ourselves to our present state, and deal with humanity, as though its existence terminated with death: and we do assert—and proofs unnumbered are ready at hand to make good the assertion—that the great civilizer of manners, the great heightener of morals, the soother of the afflicted, the patron of the destitute, the friend of the oppressed—this from its first establishment hath Christianity been; and for these effects it awakens the praise, and draws down the veneration, of those who feel not its worth as the guide to man's final inheritance. We have only to contrast the most famous and refined of ancient nations with modern and Christian, in order to assure ourselves, that in all which can give dignity to our nature, in all which can minister to public majesty and private comfort, to independence of mind, security of property, and whatsoever can either strengthen or ornament the frame-work of society—heathenism, great as may have been its progress in arts and sciences, must yield at once and immeasurably to Christianity. It is easy to upbraid our religion, because it hath verified its own prophecies, and proved itself a sword; but where, we ask, has been an engine so efficient as this sword in exalting a nation, and accomplishing the results dear to every lover of virtue and every friend of humanity? What but Christianity has banished gross vices from the open stage, where they once walked unblushingly, and forced them

where it could not extirpate them, to hide them in the shades of a disgraceful privacy? What else hath covered the land with blessings unknown in earlier and more renowned days—with hospitals, and infirmaries, and asylums? What but Christianity is gradually extirpating slavery from the earth, and bringing on a season, too long deferred indeed, but our approaches to which distance, beyond all calculation, those of the best heathen times—a season when men shall own universally a brother in man, and dash off every fetter which cruelly hath forged and cupidity fastened. What hath softened the horrors of war, rendering comparatively unheard of, the horrors of former conflicts? What hath raised the female sex, from the degraded position which they still occupy in the lands of a false faith? What hath introduced laws which secure the weak from injury, and protect the widow in her loneliness, and secure the orphan in his rights? What hath given sacredness to every domestic relationship, to the ties which bind together the husband and the wife, the parent and the child, the master and the servant, and thus brought those virtues to our fire-side, the exile of which takes all music from that beautiful word “home?” To all such questions, we have but one reply—Christianity, that exalter of nations. The determined foe of injustice in its every shape; the denouncer of malice, and revenge, and pride—passions which keep the surface of society ever stormy and agitated; the inspirer of genuine patriotism, because the enemy of selfishness; the founder and upholder of noble institutions, because the teacher of an unshackled philanthropy; Christianity hath lifted our fallen humanity to a moral greatness, which seemed wholly out of reach—to a station, which compared with that occupied under the dominion of heathenism, is like a new palace amongst the orders of creation. And there needs nothing, in order to prove that we put forth no exaggerated statement, but that Christendom be contrasted with nations which have not yet embraced Christianity. If you are in search of the attributes which give dignity to a state, of the virtues which shed a lustre and loveliness over families, value to what is magnificent in enterprise, refined in civilization, lofty in ethics, admirable in jurisprudence—you never think of turning to any but a christianized territory, in order to obtain the most signal exhibition: and just in proportion as Christianity but gains footing on the territories of heathenism, there is a distinct improvement in whatever tends to exalt a nation, and bring comfort and respectability to its households. Oh, if we could but plant the cross on every mountain, and in every valley of this globe, and prevail on a thousand tribes to throw away, by one simultaneous impulse, the idols before which they do homage, and hail Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, who doubts that we should have done infinitely more towards covering our planet with all the decencies and with all the dignities of civilized life, than by centuries of unremitted endeavour to humanize barbarism without molesting superstition? We are clear on the point—it needs no argument, because ascertained by experience, and, if not proved by experience, may be made out by irresistible argument—that in teaching a nation the religion of Christ, we teach it the principles of government which will give it fixedness as an empire, of science which will multiply the comfort, and of truths which will heighten the character of its population. Thoroughly to Christianize is thoroughly to regenerate a land: and the poor missionary, who in the simplicity of his faith, and fervour of his zeal, throws himself into the

waste of paganism, and there with no apparent mechanism for altering the condition of the savage community, labours at nothing but making Christ known to the children of idolatry—we say of this intrepid wrestler with the ignorance of a long-neglected domain, that in toiling to save souls, he is toiling to develop the intellectual power, reform the policy, and elevate, in every respect, the rank of the immortal beings who engage his solicitude; he is working with that engine, which exalteth a nation: and, therefore, do we declare our belief, that the day on which a province of Africa hearkened to his summons, started from its moral debasement, and acknowledged Jesus as its Saviour, would be also the day in which that province overstepped one half of the desert of separation which has divided it from civilized Europe, and went forward as with a giant's stride towards its due place among the nations of the earth.

So that however it is true, that in sending Christianity, you send, according to the description of the Founder himself, a sword into a land, we will not, for a moment, entertain the opinion, that Christianity is no temporal blessing, if received by the inhabitants as their chart for eternity. It is a sword; and divided families and clashing parties will attest the keenness and the strength of the weapon: but then it is also a sword whose bright flash scatters the darkness of ages, and from whose point shrink away the corruption, and the cruelty, and the fraud, which flourish in that darkness as a congenial element. It is a sword; and it must pierce to the dividing asunder of many close ties, dislocate many interests, and lacerate many hearts: but to wave this sword over a land, is to break the spell that has been fastened on it by centuries of ignorance, and to disperse or destroy those brooding hosts of foul spirits, which have long oppressed its inhabitants, and kept down every energy that can ennoble our species. And therefore are we nothing moved by the accusation, that Christianity hath brought some portion of misery into the world. We deny not the truth of the charge: to disprove that truth, would be to disprove Christianity itself. The Founder prophesied that his religion should be a sword, and the accomplishment of his prediction is one of our evidences that he came forth from God.

But when men go further, and arraign Christianity as having, on the whole, *increased* the sum of human misery, oh, then we have an appeal to the exalting power of righteousness, to the splendid institutions of civilized societies, to the bulwarks of liberty which they have bravely thrown up, to the structures which they have reared for the shelter of the suffering, to their mighty advancements in equity, and science, and good order, and greatness. Men may call Christianity a sword; but we shew you the desert blossoming as the rose, and all because ploughed by the sword of Christianity: we shew you every chain of oppression falling into shivers, and all because struck by the sword of Christianity: we shew you the coffers of the wealthy bursting open for the succour of the destitute, and all because touched by the sword of Christianity: we shew you the human intellect springing into manhood, reason starting from dwarfishness, and assuming a magnificence of power, and all because roused by the glare of the sword of Christianity: and thus able to demonstrate, that in every sense righteousness exalteth a nation, we are bold to declare, that the amount of temporal misery has been incalculably diminished by the propagation of the religion of Jesus, and that this sword, in spite of producing slaughters and divisions, hath been, and still is, as a golden sceptre, beneath which the tribes of our race have



found a rest, which heathenism knew only in its poetry, and a security, and a freedom, and a greatness, which philosophy reached only in its dreams.

Now, it has been our endeavour throughout this discourse, to impress on you the power of Christianity, to improve the condition of the people, and thus to satisfy you as to the propriety of the religious education of the poor. We have striven to shew you, that even for the accomplishment of secular ends, the Gospel of Christ is an engine which politicians, as well as philanthropists, should employ. And we have been the more anxious to do this, because we think it one of the signs of the times, that what is called "useful knowledge," does not include religious knowledge. When you come to examine into the knowledge which now usurps the definition of "useful," you find it limited to science and history; and embracing little or nothing which bears relationship to the soul and eternity. The definition is, at the least, somewhat presumptuous and misplaced; the really useful knowledge must be that which equips man for immortality, and informs him how he may secure happiness throughout the immortality of his being. And forasmuch as it is demonstrable that Christianity is as effective in fitting men for the duties of life, as in preparing for the solemnities of judgment, and is thus as useful for the present world as well as for the next, we think it right that attention should be fastened on a principle which seems nearly out of date, the principle—that to promote the piety, is to promote the good order and happiness of a people, and that moral greatness is both the foundation and safeguard of civil liberty. Whatever, then, our earnestness for the education of the poor, we have no hope of any system of which religion is not made the basis. We are sure, that in having Christianity in our hand, we have a machinery for grappling with that wretchedness which results from the inequalities of the human condition; and for bringing about such a revolution in society as would satisfy the desires of the most ardent philanthropist. But let us in no degree set aside this machinery, as though modern discoveries had originated a better. To develop the intellect without improving the heart, (and for this Christianity is alone sufficient,) is to make a mighty population, but mighty only in arts—a population conscious of strength, but ignorant how to apply it—and concerning which, therefore, the likelihood, if not the certainty is, that they will bury themselves beneath the ruins of all that is venerable and glorious in the land.

It is, then, the *Scriptural* instruction of the poor, which we look to for promoting the well-being of society; for it is "righteousness" which "exalteth a nation." And scriptural instruction it is which is imparted to four hundred and sixty children, in the National Schools of this large and opulent district; so that we have every confidence in commending them to your liberal support. You cannot require lengthened appeals, in order that you may be led to contribute cheerfully and largely, to a cause which thus solicits you both as patriots and Christians. If you enter the courts and alleys of a densely peopled neighbourhood, the condition of children will excite your sympathies as much or even more, than that of adults: you will feel, that however pitiable the spectacle of vice and degradation by which you are too often met, the worst spectacle of all, because that which augurs a continued infliction of wretchedness upon a parish, is that of the rising generation growing up in the ignorance of God, and trained to the imitation of the dissoluteness of their parents. No approach can be

made towards the moral renovation of a country, except by dealing, and that, too, most vigorously, with the infancy and boyhood of that country. We can expect little success, when attacking the wickedness which hath grown with the growth, and strengthened with the strength, of our adult population. Nothing indeed is too hard for the Lord; and we would therefore ply the manhood and the old age of crime with the lessons of the Bible; but the alone hopeful attempt, is that of applying Christianity as a preventive, and turning away the children from the steps of their fathers. And this attempt it is in which you are now asked to join: the parochial schools gathering together the boys and the girls of our lower orders, and disciplining them in the fear of the Almighty, may be the nursery for those who shall exalt the nation; and thus possibly be greater than princes—greater morally, as admitted into the citizenship of the heavenly Jerusalem—greater politically, as doing more towards strengthening the institutions of their country. If God impress these truths on your minds, you will on this, and every the like occasion, display liberality in promoting the education of the poor.

## RELIGION THE ONLY PRESERVATIVE AGAINST MORAL EVIL.

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 REV. WILLIAM CURLING, A.M.

 TRINITY CHURCH, NEWINGTON, SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1834 \*.
 

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 "Keep them from the evil."—JOHN, xvii. 15.
 

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THESE were amongst the last words which our gracious and compassionate Saviour put up to his Father just before he left the world, on behalf of his disciples. He had, hitherto, been with them, assisting them by his counsel in all cases of difficulty, guarding them in his doctrine against all error, both in judgment and practice; and constantly setting before them, as the rule of their life, his own pious example. But now, their guide, their counsellor, their friend, was going away from them—was about to leave them, in a great measure, to themselves; to leave them too, in a world full of wickedness, and abounding with temptation. And this was a time in which he who loved them, and had always taken a deep interest in their welfare, could not but feel for them the greatest possible anxiety.

The parent, you know, feels for his child, when, just before death, fixing his eye on it, he thinks of the many dangers to which he will leave it exposed, without his advice to guide him, and his presence to admonish him, and so looking upwards, he pours out over it a parent's best prayer, imploring for it the care and protection of heaven. Similar to these were the feelings of our blessed Lord: he knew exactly what the world was, and he also knew in what a dangerous, what a peculiarly trying situation his disciples would very shortly be placed. They were not only going to act their part in it as Christians, but they were going forth as his emissaries, publishing his religion; and, in such a service, they would meet with peculiar difficulties, and be assailed by peculiar temptations: Satan would lay snares for them, to impede their progress; and the men of the world would raise against them a strong, a violent opposition. They would have much to guard against, much to struggle with, much to resist; and, perhaps, their minds not being yet sufficiently established, they might yield to fear, turn traitors to avoid persecution; and, buffeted by the winds and waves of this troublesome world, make "shipwreck of faith." Yes, they might do all this; left to themselves, they *would* do it: for though Christians, though ministers, though apostles, they were still flesh and blood; nothing in themselves but weak and defenceless creatures; having no power to resist one temptation, or to overcome one enemy. And, therefore, he prays for them: he forgets for a while his own coming sorrows, in a tender concern for their well-being and happiness. And what is it he asks in his prayer? Is it, that his Father, to whom as a mediator he addressed his petition, would remove his followers from the reach of this world's temptation, by taking them altogether out of it? Oh, no: "I

\* For the benefit of the National Schools.

pray not Father that thou shouldest take them out of the world"—“There thou hast placed them, and there let them remain; there let them be useful; let them extend far and wide the beneficial influence of a holy example; let them shine as lights in it; only one thing I ask of thee in reference to their continuance on the earth, and that is, that thou shouldest *“keep them from the evil.”*

This important petition will now occupy our attention. It teaches us three things, which I earnestly entreat you to consider:—first, that there is an evil in the world which we ought to guard against; secondly, that those who have others under their care, should use every endeavour to preserve them from its influence; and, thirdly, that it is God alone who can keep us from evil.

I have first to call your attention to a fact well worthy of it, that **THERE IS AN EVIL IN THE WORLD WHICH WE OUGHT TO GUARD AGAINST.**

It has been thought by some, that, when our Lord said “Keep them from the evil,” he meant the evil one, the devil, that wicked, fallen angel, the author of all evil, called in Scripture, the “god of this world,” and whose influence in it is indeed very great. We may give this sense to it without at all weakening the force of the great lesson which the text teaches us; but it seems to me best to accord with the scope of the whole prayer, to understand the expression of moral evil in the general, that evil which the wicked one has sown all over the world, which has sprung up from time to time without intermission, from the fall of Adam to this day; and which is everywhere to be found in it. For you clearly perceive, that the weight of anxiety pressing on our Lord’s mind at that interesting and painful period, was, his leaving his followers in a world where they would be subject to temptation; and therefore, in his prayer he connects the idea of evil with the world, and expresses this as his wish, that whilst they lived in it they might not be hurt by it.

Now of all things that need proof, moral evil is, alas! that one thing that stands in *least* need of it. You have not, I am sure, to be convinced of the fact of its existence; for notwithstanding all those natural beauties in creation which we look at and admire, those glens and mountains, those lakes, those verdant plains, that rich, varied scenery, which make the world so lovely—I would rather say, too much loved as a residence, you must have remarked, or else you are men of no discernment at all, that there is a moral evil spoiling every thing, working our ruin, destructive to our interests. Now, though all men will admit the fact, seeing what is said of it in books of ancient philosophy, as well as from what they have learned by experience and revelation, there is, as you are aware, a great difference of opinion, as to when a thing is evil and when it is not. But if I lay this down, that whatever feeds the pride and vanity of the creature; whatever fans the flame of unhallowed passion; whatever deadens the spiritual affections; whatever interferes with the soul’s pure and sublime devotion; whatever alienates, draws off from God; whatever makes a man sensual, earthly-minded, and consequently unfit for heaven; I say, if I lay it down that all this is evil, who that knows any thing of his Bible, will dare dispute it? True, it will condemn the men who go to our theatres, and who think it no harm to be a little gay, whilst in that season, in which (as they say) they can best enjoy life. True, it will condemn many men of high sterling character, who exercise all the amiable affections, and shew to one another all the courtesies and kind attentions of life. But what of that. There is a



scriptural standard, and we must measure, we must examine every thing by it—we must take a right view of evil, else we shall never depart from it.

Now the evil of the world is sometimes so latent, as not to be discernible; and let me tell you, my brethren, that *that* evil which is least discernible, is very often the *most dangerous*. We see, for instance, the gross vices of intemperance and debauchery—our eyes are disgusted with the sight; and the thing is so plainly evil, that if we are not sunk almost to a level with the brute creation, we shrink with abhorrence from the foul pollution of vices so monstrous. But there is an evil that we do not so easily see, and, therefore, are the more likely to be hurt by it—it exists in books, which we read for their sentimentalism, for the information which they give us in science, in history, or which we take up simply for the beauty of the poetry; perhaps they were written by some man, who wishing to make infidels, thought he should best succeed by presenting his false doctrine in such a pleasing, insinuating form, as might procure for it an easy admission into the minds of the unwary; and thus imperceptibly and by degrees, we become contaminated, and before we are aware of it we imbibe the moral poison. It exists, again, in those parties of pleasure, where there is nothing said and done but what savours of earthliness, and which, because they dissipate the mind, and make it forgetful of better and nobler pursuits, are highly injurious to those who frequent them.

Now, here I would observe, that if our Lord, who was well acquainted with the world, and who also knew what harm his poor, weak, peccable, and unsuspecting creatures might get to their own souls, by unguarded intercourse with the things and with the men of it, prayed his Father, that he would “Keep them from the evil;” surely we who are the *subjects* of temptation, ought to pray against it *ourselves*. The Christian feels it, and therefore, it is the point upon which he is most earnest at the throne of grace: but the man of the world thinks but little of the evil of it. His chief wish is, that God would keep him from affliction, from loss, from disappointment. His chief anxiety is, that he may not be injured by slander or misrepresentation in his own character, and in that of his family; but the thought seldom occurs to him of the possibility of his being hurt *spiritually*, of his being contaminated by *moral* evil—and do you wonder then, that he talks with such an air of unsuspecting confidence, of his being able to go here and there, without getting harm from it? Do you wonder that he pleads for those things, which you are taught to consider objectionable, because presenting a variety of temptations, calling them *innocent*? And do you wonder that he takes a part in most of the fashionable follies, that he enters without reserve into the gay circles of society, and that he gratifies his love for worldly pleasure, by participating in the common amusements of life? The fact is, he has not your feelings, nor your apprehension—he does not see things in a clear scriptural light—he takes a very different view of the world from what our Lord and his disciples took of it. He is in such a state of mind, so thoroughly incapable of thinking as you do, because completely destitute of all *spiritual* understanding, that to argue with him as to the impropriety of the course which he pursues, would be, perhaps, to spend breath to no purpose—you leave off where you began, you cannot convince him. Wait awhile, and the light of heaven may break in upon his soul—and then he will take a different view of things: he will then see harm where he cannot discover

it now. The things of the world will, one after another, drop off from him, and he will willingly renounce all hurtful pleasures for the pleasures of religion.

I come now secondly, to consider in connexion with our text, **THE DUTY THAT DEVOLVES UPON THOSE WHO HAVE IN ANY WAY THE CARE OF OTHERS.** It is drawn from the example of our Lord, and it consists in their using every endeavour to preserve them from evil. It speaks to parents and guardians, to heads of families, and to ministers; and it tells us, that whether we have individuals, or households, or large flocks, committed to our care, we are to consider ourselves as having an important, responsible charge, and that we ought to think of them with anxiety, pray for them, and do all we can, with the view of promoting their best, their highest interests.

Now this is, alas! in very many cases, very sadly forgotten. Much will be done, for instance, by the parent, (and who can blame him for it?) to promote his child's temporal welfare; but then little or nothing will be done to promote the well-being of his soul. He is allowed to mix with the thoughtless, to read books of an evil tendency, to go to places where, to say the least of it, there is much injurious association. He is brought up in the habit of paying little regard to the sanctity of the Sabbath; his parent profanes the day by reading the newspaper, by having worldly company, or by conversing with his family upon subjects purely of an earthly nature—and what can that parent expect will be the result of it? There is no anxious eye directed to his spiritual welfare, no holy books set before him, no pious example—he is trained up to walk according to the course of “this present evil world,” he is not trained up for heaven! The mother, too, though she does it, as she thinks, for the good of her child, acts too often most unchristianly. She allows the young mind to be occupied by the silly tales of romance, instead of endeavouring to have it early impressed with the great truths of religion. She allows her child to follow the bent of her own inclination, never checking her desire for gay pleasurable amusement, by telling her that in religion there is far more of what will conduce to her happiness; and her greatest pride is (so she tells you) to see her in after-life do credit to the training she received from her mother in all fashionable accomplishments!

Oh! ye parents, stop and consider whether ye are doing the best for those dear children whom God hath committed to your care. Do not be anxious, ye fathers, that your sons should be heirs of a large earthly estate, but rather that they may be heirs of that rich and glorious inheritance which God “has laid up for those who love Him,” in heaven; and you, ye mothers, be careful to train up your daughters more for eternity than for time. Beware where ye take them, or where ye give them liberty to go. Above all, take heed what sort of example you set before them; God has placed them in your hands, he has intrusted them to your care, you are responsible for their well-being in this world, but far more for their well-being in the next. And oh! what a heart-thrilling thing, what a dreadful consummation of all anxieties concerning them, if by bad advice and bad example, or else by entire negligence, you prove yourselves their destroyers, and have your misery heightened in the world of lost spirits by the tormenting accusation of your poor children's upbraidings!

Go then, I pray you, to your chambers, and there upon your bended knees, present your offspring to the Lord. Say with the aged patriarch “Oh that



these my children may live before Thee." Yea, call them to you, let them pray *with you*. One of the *first* acts you should teach them is that of prayer. I go further—you are heads of families, you have servants under you, whose souls are as precious in God's sight as those of your children. Well then, let a family altar be set up in the midst of your households, and do ye, your children, and your servants, all bending around it, offer upon it your morning and evening sacrifice, presenting it to God through the blood of the Redeemer. If you do this, you and yours will be blessed. Oh! that prayers offered in this way, and offered in a proper spirit, were to come up before God, from every family in England! Then God would smile upon us and we should be happy. There would be no pestilence, no fears of dangerous innovations, "no complaining in our streets." Our righteousness would exalt us, and we should be able to say, with confidence, at all times and under all circumstances, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Let us now pass to our third and last division. It brings before us a most important truth, and that is, that **IT IS GOD ALONE WHO CAN KEEP US FROM EVIL.**

Our Saviour asks his Father to keep his disciples from the evil, to which he himself by going from them, would, in a great measure, leave them exposed; and it becomes us, learning a lesson from what our Saviour did on this occasion, to look above ourselves, above all created helps, and to place our sole, our entire dependence upon God. Now there is no doctrine more necessary, in my opinion, to be urged upon man's mind, than that which relates to his weakness; I ought to say to his *helplessness*; for he is naturally a very proud creature, he loves a spirit of independence, even in matters of religion; he thinks himself better and stronger than he really is; and he does not sufficiently recognize the hand that first formed him, and can alone preserve him.

We talk of our principles, thinking them firm and steadfast: and we sometimes venture to go even where we ought not, vainly imagining that, though we do place ourselves by going there within the sphere of temptation, we yet have sufficient power to resist. But who that knows himself, will ever trust himself? Where is the man who confidently tells me, that he can go any where and get no harm? I will not believe him. I would not believe even a man of God, however spiritually-minded, however strong in grace, if he said so; for that passage of Scripture, proves at once the folly of self-confidence, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Let God withdraw from us his protecting arm, let him remove from us those ramparts of his grace with which he now shelters us, and we are at once laid open to the attacks of our enemies. Let him leave our little bark, frail and perishable as it is, to pursue its voyage on the sea of life, without his presence to guide it, and with every "wind of doctrine" it will deviate from its course, it will fall upon the quicksands, or be driven on the rocks; it will not be able to bear up against the winds and waves of strong, violent temptation; it will soon go down into the bowels of the deep; it will perish for ever. My brethren you are safe, only so long as God keeps you from evil. Oh! then look up to him. In these times, especially, when you see so many of your brethren departing so strangely from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel, I feel it my duty to give you this advice. Remember "thou standest by faith." "Be not" then "high-minded but fear."

Now the subject upon which I have been dwelling, is **closely connected with**

another, which it is my duty to bring before you to-day. I have to advocate the cause of the National Schools, established in this parish; and I do so most cheerfully, because, I am quite sure, that the most likely means, under God, of preserving our youth of both sexes from evil, is, the giving them sound scriptural instruction. I would not have you think, that I am the friend of education to whatever degree it may be carried, or in whatever way it may be given; for it may be carried too far in the case of poor children, and then it becomes an evil rather than a good: and you may give it without any reference to religion, and then it becomes a curse rather than a blessing to mankind: for unsanctified reason begets pride of intellect, and pride of intellect is a near step to the rejection of revelation. But though I take this view, this cautious, scriptural view of it, I oppose most strenuously the argument which goes to keep education altogether from the children of the humbler classes of society; for I hold that mental ignorance is a moral degradation, and I cannot but think, that the man, who says, he would not teach poor children to read, is very few removes from him who says, in the language of cold-hearted infidelity, that he would not give them the Bible. I hold that education is important in a high degree—important for this world, but far more for the next, and when I see it carried on, as it is in these schools, upon such a principle as I cannot but admire; when I go into these schools, take the Bible in my hand, and find from the answers which the children give me, that they are taught the knowledge of their God and Saviour, and are thus trained up for eternity as well as time: oh! I do look upon such education as a thing of incalculable value. I see, in the present race of children so educated, materials that may form a beautiful edifice, a holy temple for the Lord: and I hail such early instruction as the harbinger of a holier, happier day, when “our sons” (as the sweet poetry of the Psalms expresses it) “shall be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.”

Yes, brethren, it is to the young we look to give health, and strength, and new life, I may add, to the constitution of our parishes—it is to the young we look to form a good-principled, a well-regulated, a sound-thinking, and a useful population—it is to the young we look, to become in after years, the pillars of our establishment, and what is more, to fill up, in the Church of Christ, places vacated by saints departed to glory. Yes, it is to the young we look for all this, and, therefore, what can we give them half so important, as sound scriptural instruction. I need not tell you, how peculiarly this age is marked by a spirit of infidelity. The cry of liberalism is heard all over our land. That doctrine which our Church in her service, has, this day, been so strongly and so properly insisting on; that doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, and other doctrines equally important, because equally fundamental, are most unblushingly objected to and denied; and shall I go too far in saying, that our own scriptural Church is attacked, just now, by very many of her enemies, with this sole purpose in view, that by working her ruin, they may throw down with her her settled form of faith, her standard of orthodoxy? Brethren, these things are going on—our children are likely to be infected by the evil spirit of the times—and, therefore, I say again, let us give them, what will fortify them against seduction, viz. sound, scriptural education. With these observations, I leave the cause of these schools to your sound judgment and Christian feelings, being well assured that you will answer my appeal on their behalf with your wonted liberality.

## MYSTERIES IN RELIGION.

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PERCY CHAPEL, CHARLOTTE STREET, FITZROY SQUARE, JUNE 19, 1834.

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"Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."—ISAIAH, xlv. 15.

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"BE still," saith the Lord of heaven and earth, "and know that I am the Lord." "I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth." "O taste, and see," saith the Psalmist, inviting the people of God to the enjoyment of their privileges, "taste and see, that the Lord is good." And again: "To know thee," saith the Saviour, in his prayer to the Father, "is eternal life; to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Among all the objects by which the human understanding can be exercised, or the human affections engaged, the most important beyond comparison, and, with all who believe that there is a God beyond dispute, is God himself—God in the mysteriousness of his person and existence, God in the sovereignty of his creation and providence, God in the riches of his atoning love in Jesus Christ, God in the energy of his saving power by the Holy Ghost.

My dear Christian brethren, I gladly avail myself of this renewed opportunity of calling your attention in this place, to this the highest of all themes which can occupy the tongue or the attention of human beings. "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Such was the exclamation of the prophet, when sinking under the weight of the revelation that had been given to him. Something of God was made known to him; but much remained unknown. A beam of light had fallen upon him, but it was only sufficient to make him intelligently conscious of the unfathomable depth of the Fountain of Light itself. More light hath fallen upon us, and, with the New Testament in our hands, we might truly say, "Verily thou art a God that revealest thyself, O Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour." And yet, when that revelation is examined, and examined, if possible, with apostolical skill, we must exclaim, in unaffected apostolical humility, in ignorance, conscious and confessed, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! His ways are past finding out! Who hath known his mind? Who hath been his counsellor?" "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever."

I am persuaded, my brethren, that one of the most important features in the subject which I desire now to bring before you, is *the indispensable necessity that exists for a mystery*. The indispensable necessity of a mystery: for the human mind is so constituted, that either it abuses the mystery into superstition, or it rejects the whole truth because of the mystery, and plunges, however unconsciously, into infidelity. To recognise, without abusing, a mystery, is the attitude

to which a finite mind must be brought, in rightly receiving a revelation from the Living God. For observe: suppose God to make a full and adequate revelation of himself; there is a point in the examination of that revelation, at which man's understanding must fail; for man's understanding, at the best, is finite; God is infinite. The finite cannot grasp the infinite; and, therefore, there must needs be a point, at which the power of the finite understanding that can take in that infinite communication, would cease; and at a particular point, there would be an horizon to man's perceptions of truth. That is, to us there would be a point at which the revelation would cease to be explanation, and a man's view would be bounded, and a mystery would commence. For what is a mystery? A mystery is a revelation unexplained; a truth told, told distinctly, but not reasoned upon and explained; a truth so told that we can boldly say *what* it is, but not so explained as to enable us to say *how* it is. The personal existence of God, as declared in Holy Scripture, is a mystery; it is a revelation unexplained, a statement unreasoned; and it presents a horizon to the human understanding, which fades into mystery: and I wish to shew you how unreasonable the man is who will reject the objects in the foreground, and in the centre of the landscape, because he cannot, with equal precision, discern the objects in the horizon.

GOD; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; one God; distinct, yet not divided; separate, yet still one. *The Son*; co-equal and co-eternal with the Father; yet begotten of the Father. *The Holy Spirit*; proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Son sent by the Father, and filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit received from the Father, and sent by the Son. The Father God; the Son God; the Holy Spirit God; and yet there is but one God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." God saying *of* himself, "I am, and there is none else; I know not any." God saying *to* himself, "Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." What human understanding can grasp this? There is a revelation unexplained; the Trinity is an *imperfect discovery*, not a *contradiction*. There is a great difference between these two things. The intellect, to which nothing is mysterious, must be infinite: but a finite intellect can take cognizance of a contradiction. There may seem to be a contradiction in the truth; but the cause is in the infirmity of the creature, and not in the infirmity of the truth itself. The subject matter of the proposition is too high; it is beyond our reach. We cannot demonstrate a contradiction, for we cannot enter into the matter of the statement. If such a statement were made concerning three *men* being one *man*, the subject matter of the proposition being within the boundaries of our cognizance, so that we can reason concerning it, one should be capable of proving the contradiction; but when such a statement is made of God, the subject matter of the proposition is beyond our reach: and though this statement may seem contradictory, the fault is here—in man's understanding, not in the truth.

Is not this the same in other things, as well as in religion? Do we understand *ourselves*, my brethren? The metaphysician inquires into the human mind; and the anatomist searches into the veins, and arteries, and joints of the human body; and they each make many discoveries: but there is a point at which they are both baffled—the union of mind and matter, and the power of the one over the other. It is a mysterious region, the fact of which cannot be denied, but



the explanation of which cannot be given. They guess about it: and some, fastening upon the material structure, deny mind altogether, and would confine the man to organized matter. What I wish to shew, is, that in the science which connects itself with the existence of a man, there is a region of mystery; there is a fact: and in philosophy, facts hold the place which revelation holds in religion. This Book contains our facts. Experience gives the philosopher his facts; and facts bring him to a point where he must confess mystery. Where is the metaphysician that hath ever explained the action of mind upon matter, and the ready movements of flesh and bone, at the secret bidding of the mysterious visitant within? And where is the anatomist who hath discovered its origin, with his searching knife? No; there is a mystery in it. Now, where would be the philosophy, where would be the reason of the man, who would deny the proximate facts which are discovered by the anatomist, and the proximate statements which are made, truly, by the metaphysician, because, if you press them both a little further, you come to a mystery? Would there be reason, would there be philosophy, in rejecting both of these branches of human learning, because they bring you, when legitimately pursued, into a region where you must confess yourself a little child, and receive the fact unexplained? For a mystery in philosophy is a fact unexplained; as a mystery in religion is a revelation unexplained.

Take another instance. Much has been discovered, and much has been demonstrated, in the science of astronomy. The motions of the heavenly bodies have been made matter of calculation amongst men; and true calculation; the results proving themselves true, by periodical returns of infallible observation. But there is a point at which we reach a mystery here. Upon what do all these calculations depend; upon what do all these motions rest? Upon a quality, which Sir Isaac Newton baptized; he gave the mystery a name; he called it "gravitation." Grant gravitation, and we can reason about the solar system. But what is gravitation? Who can explain that? Why should matter have gravity? It has. Yes; we know it has; that is a fact: but why should it? There is here a mystery. Why should the tendency of matter be to the centre of the earth? Why is it a fact, that if you could bore through the centre of the earth, if you had a hollow diameter through the earth, and dropped a ball through it, it would vibrate at the centre, and, having fallen down, it would fall up again, back to the centre, and would never, and could never, fall through? No one can tell why it is. Here is a mystery: grant this, which is in the horizon, and you prove your nearer object. But this must be granted as the mystery in the matter. And where would be the reason, I ask, where the philosophy, where the sound sense, where would be the supreme discernment of the men, who, because they cannot reason through, and explain gravitation, would take upon them to reject the Newtonian system of philosophy in the heavens?

Now let us return to our sublimer theme. Here is a mystery concerning the existence of God; he is a "God that hideth himself;" he has given some information, but he has maintained a reserve, and there is a darkness. Suppose that the Trinity of persons in the Godhead were made plain to us; it would only be by the revelation of some farther-off point in the truth, which would throw forward the Trinity into the landscape, and enable us to look through it; and

then the point so revealed would occupy the place of the horizon, and we would have transferred the mystery from one part of truth to another; and we would still have a mystery; for we are finite, and God is infinite. Now, where is the sense, the reason, the philosophy, the superior discernment—where is the more reasonable religion, of rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, because there is a mystery in it, and rejecting the proximate statements of redemption, which all hang upon the Trinity, because, that when pressed home, they involve the human mind in a mystery, and make man feel, what he ought to feel—that he is a little ignorant child, at his highest attainments, in the presence of his Maker? No; this boasted reason is pride. This rational religion is the refusal of the mystery. It looks very like a determination to be what the devil said man should be, “as God,” instead of being as a little child. And, verily, I say to you, dear brethren, except a man receive God’s truth as a little child, willing to understand what his Father explains, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God.

My object in this much has been, to reconcile you to the existence of a mystery as regards the Godhead; revealed, but not explained, in the Bible. The Trinity is in the horizon, the Trinity in Unity: it is the horizon of revelation to us upon this point: it is the gravitation. Granting it, the whole statements of redemption are capable of demonstration: rejecting it, the whole scheme of redemption is a nonentity; for there is no Mediator, there is no atonement, there is no Sanctifier. Reject the Trinity, and the gap which sin has made between God and man finds no one that can fill it up. All false glosses upon Christianity leave this gap unfilled up. Admit the mystery; and by the assistance of it, and resting upon it, we are in possession of the fundamental element of truth; which invests with infinite importance, and with demonstrative clearness, the mediation, the atonement, the recovery of the fallen creature back into the very bosom of God, which is salvation.

“Verily God hideth himself;” not as regards his personal existence only, but as regards **THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ALL HIS WORKS IN CREATION AND PROVIDENCE**, “Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.” He is the origin, he is the support, he is the end of all creation: no creature can come into existence at any time, can continue in existence for a moment, or can perform one single act, mental or bodily, but in conformity to, in compliance with, and in subserviency to, the eternal will of the Living God. Angels, principalities, and powers in heaven—angels, principalities, and powers fallen to hell—all the visible creation of suns and planets, with their satellites innumerable, their atmospheres around them, and their millions of multitudinous being upon them, all at every moment of existence hang upon the absolute will of God, for life, for breath, for motion, for all things. He spake the word, “Let them be,” and the solitude of eternity was peopled with the wonders of creation: and were he to speak the word “Let them cease to be,” annihilation would be instantaneous and universal, and God would be left again alone in the solitude of eternity. This is a glorious lesson for us to learn, my friends, that we may know our place, and that we may know something of our God; a God that hideth himself, indeed, but a God that revealeth himself in part.

Holiness, as well as power, is inseparable from our God; for as he has the power to do what he will without controul, he has also the right to do what



he will without injustice. There is nothing in the history of the fallen angels, which can excite the smallest hesitation about ascribing still unto God in glory, holiness, unsullied holiness. The elect angels see and know this; they perceive that their original numbers are thinned, that thousands who at one time joined with them in singing the praises of their God have been cast down into darkness and ruin. They know full well, that neither Satan, nor any of his company, possessed a single power but what God gave them; or were tempted by a single opportunity but what God made for them: and yet instead of reasoning upon that fact, as *we* are sometimes tempted to reason, and thereupon calling in question the holiness of their Maker, we know that the language of the elect angels before the throne, with that history before their eyes, and the torments of their former companions clear in their intelligence—that their language is, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.” Here is a mystery; we have intelligence enough to grapple with this mystery in its difficult parts, but we have not information enough to overcome this difficulty. Here again we are brought into a horizon. Where now is the sense, the reason—where is the superior discernment, and the greater exercise of soundness of discretion and judgment, in rejecting the sovereignty of God, in the absolute doing of all things, because that in following it out we are involved in a mystery as regards his moral government? If a man is to say, “If God do all these things absolutely, who hath resisted his will? who can resist his will? why, or how, can he then find fault?”—the language of the Scripture is in reply, an appeal to our ignorance; it is not a further explanation of the mystery, but it is a very significant instruction to us, that the apparent difficulty lies on us, and not on him; for the answer is, “Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” And the illustration is, “Hath not the potter power over the same clay, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” Is there any explanation in that? Nay, brethren; it re-asserts the very depth of the mystery, and leaves it unexplained. It is a revelation unexplained: nothing can be more clearly stated; yet there is no explanation of it whatever.

There is, then, moral government with our God who hideth himself, at the same time that there is absolute sovereignty: and the principles of his moral government are the principles of equity, and righteousness, and truth. “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” This is the pedigree of damnation: man’s lust—unto sin—unto death. But if a man shall reason thereupon, and say, “Well, if it be so, that man’s sin is his own, and the evil he does originates in himself; then, by parity of reasoning, the good that he does must originate in himself also.” Harken to the next words of the Apostle; “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Here again the mystery is repeated: sin is ascribed to the sinner’s own act and deed, according to his own free will; and all that is good is ascribed to the sovereign grace of God. Verily God hideth himself whilst he revealeth himself. Mercy and truth go before his face, as a Saviour; justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

Now, dear brethren, observe how one class of persons, in order to get rid of this mystery, as they vainly think, magnify human free-will into the turning point of power in this great subject, so as to make the omnipotent God pause in his designs for super-omnipotent man. And mark how another party, to get rid of the mystery, as they vainly think, on the other side, deny the human free-agency, and make man a piece of matter, as a machine. Neither of these two things, when pressed so as to infringe upon the other, can be true; yet the truth lies in the admission of both these statements, as a revelation from God unexplained. It is a mystery. We may indeed say more upon this point. Here God hath revealed himself; not unto the clearing up of the difficulty, but unto the intelligent view of it; so far that we have become intelligently ignorant. Is that a contradiction in terms? "*Intelligently ignorant.*" No man will say so, but the man who is so ignorant as not to be conscious of his own ignorance. The wise man will acknowledge, that the height of his wisdom consists in having become intelligently ignorant. It is of the nature of an intelligent creature to decide upon the evidence before it; and to decide freely upon that evidence and it is in the nature of things, that God, in his supreme providence, should minister whatever quantity of evidence, upon every subject, he seeth fit to every person. Such person, then, decides freely, in the exercise of his free-will, upon the evidence submitted to him; but the amount of evidence, the measure, the time, the place of the evidence, all these are in the sovereign disposal of God in his Providence. So that, by ministering a certain quantity of evidence to a man upon a point, the decision of the man's mind, according to the action of free-will is secured, without any violence done to the constitution of the moral creature. He acts freely upon the evidence he has; the evidence, the quantity of it, the measure, the time, the place, all the outward circumstances connected with it, are in the sovereign disposal of God. Has any man the whole case before him, in all its bearing, direct and indirect, present and future, of any question upon which he is called to decide? No such thing; the man must needs look through futurity into eternity, to see all the bearings of his conduct: but upon what he does see he acts freely. O verily God is a God that hideth himself while he revealeth himself.

My dear brethren, one of my objects at this time, is to implore you not to be turned back from the simplicity of faith, by plausible talk about the unreasonableness of admitting mysteries. It is a time when the foundations of our faith are sifted; it is a time when we, who are the authorized teachers of the faith, ought to grapple with these siftings, and go to the foundations themselves. It is a time when we should be prepared to stand in our places, and meet the diversity of attacks that are made upon our faith; not by railing for railing, but by sound teaching; that the minds of our people, being in possession of the subject, may be fortified, not to retort against error, but to reject the error, and to be quiet.

Now let us take another point in which God verily hideth himself while he revealeth himself, and in which we must again find a mystery: it is in **THE RICHES OF HIS ATONING LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST.**

We now come to use expressions with which you are more familiar; but if you will examine the expressions, you will find that they involve you in a

mystery, as dark and as inexplicable as either of the two we have hitherto touched upon—either the Trinity of the persons, or the absolute Sovereignty of disposal in the Godhead. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:” “In this was manifested the love of God, that he gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:” “He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” He hath laid our sins upon him, and his blood “cleanseth from all sin.” What statements are these? For “sin is the transgression of the law:” the law is the expression of God’s eternal mind and truth: not one jot or one tittle of the law can be made void; it must all be fulfilled; it must all be magnified as the expression of the righteous character of God. An offence against that high and glorious declaration of God’s character, is an offence against himself, the Infinite God. The demerit of the offence must bear proportion to the dignity of the person offended.

Look how this may be simply illustrated in human things. Suppose a man were to commit an offence consisting of the act of striking another man; the punishment justly awarded to that offender will vary with the dignity of the person struck. If the man struck were an equal, his punishment is comparatively light. Suppose the offender were a soldier; if the man struck be his commanding officer, his punishment is enhanced: if the man struck were the king, his offence is high treason, the punishment is death. Now mark; the offence was the same throughout; it was striking a man; but the punishment varies with the position and dignity of the man struck: so that from a petty fine, or a short imprisonment, for striking one man, the punishment is magnified into death for striking another man.

Apply this to an offence against the Infinite God, and see what sort of a punishment such an offence calls for: and who shall bear that punishment? Lay it upon a finite creature—it will take him through all eternity to endure, and he will never have finished it; for, the punishment being infinite, it must either be infinite in quantity or infinite in time. A finite creature can have but a finite quantity, and therefore he must have an infinite time. Who shall endure that punishment so as to make an end of it? Whoever does it must have infinite power; and yet the punishment to be endured which a man deserves for breaking the law of God, must be such a punishment as a man can feel, such punishment as can attach itself to the constitution of a man; and yet we have seen that it must be such as can appeal with infinity to claim merit before God. Who shall endure it, if there is not a person to endure it, who, while he has a divine nature to give infinity to every pang, has a human nature to give infinity to every pang; so that every suffering shall apply to us, and have merit with our God? If there be not such a sufferer, there is no salvation. And how can there be such a sufferer? Here is the mystery—the mystery of the holy incarnation. The incarnation is the proximate mystery of redemption. Who can explain it? God and man one person: as soul and body compose one man, God and man composing one Christ; so that the lash of the broken law shall take effect on human flesh, and the reproaches deserved by fallen men shall break a human heart; and yet the person who has human flesh to be lacerated, and a human heart to be broken, shall have merit with God, and shall, instead of being

exposed to the punishment throughout eternity, be able to concentrate and to exhaust the punishment at once.

Here is a mystery. Now, I am well persuaded, that it is because of being involved in this very mystery, that so many of our reasoning and educated fellow-countrymen and fellow-sinners are, in mind, if not avowedly in creed, rejecting the peculiarities of the atonement. But where is the reason, where is the judgment, where is the superior discernment, of refusing the proximate lesson, because of being involved in an ultimate mystery? Let me appeal again to the astronomer and to the anatomist; and let me send these reasoning Socinians, or others, who reject the atonement because of the mystery—let me send them back to school to learn where there is any science without a mystery. Let us turn them to their own hearts, to see how the movement of some mysterious visitant within, shall enable them to move the fingers and hands without; and when they have explained all this, and made it perfectly clear, then let us hear their reasoning (but not before) against a mystery in religion.

And yet again: when the glorious statements connected with the work and person of Jesus Christ, God and man in one person, are made in the hearing of men, they proclaim such a manifestation of God's love towards man, as is calculated to put every reasonable being upon a moral trial: enough is done for every man that has the reason of a man, and that hears the Word of God, to put him upon a moral trial—a trial between the love of sin and the love of God; the love of God manifested in Christ, and claiming the sinner's love in return, and the love of sin, experienced in the heart and flesh, holding the sinner a willing captive. To this the Saviour appeals when he says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He that hath natural capacities to hearken to other subjects, to be influenced by what he hears, to be induced to undertake self-denying labours upon the authority of evidence given, and the practical power of that evidence over his moral composition—he that hath ears so to hear, in human matters, let him exert those moral powers in this greater matter, and let him hear the love of God manifested in his Son. Thus all who hear the Gospel are put upon a fresh trial: they are transferred from the comparatively untried state of Tyre and Sidon, into the deeper trial of Chorazin and Bethsaida. The result of that truth, owing to the corruption of human nature, is, according to the Word of Truth, that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; and that they all, with one consent, begin to make excuse. Then what must be the consequence? If all, with one consent, begin to make excuse, if it be the universal characteristic that they love darkness rather than light, then is the light cast out. And so it would be, but that, in that moral trial, when every reasonable being who hears the words of the Gospel, is put, as it were, upon a moral pivot, on which he is to turn one way or other, and incline to the love of God or the love of sin—when the love of sin has overcome him, brings him down, and he is making excuses, when they are all, with one consent, making excuses—then comes the effectual grace of God, the effectual energy of salvation, by the power of the Holy Ghost, turning the sinner on the right side of this pivot, and securing him to God for ever.

This is the way of salvation; if it were not for this, there would be no salvation at all, after all that Christ has done. And this is the execution in time, and from day to day, of the eternal decree of God's election. This is the



transcribing into the book of the Church, the names that are written in the book of life.

THIS IS GOD, IN THE ENERGY OF HIS SAVING POWER, BY THE HOLY GHOST. Now here there is a mystery; for if man be so fallen, that the moral trial he is put upon by the statements of redemption in Jesus Christ, would invariably turn against him, and if God knows this, then it seems to our reasoning mind, very like a mockery of our misery; and indeed it is so denounced by many. Here the real reason is, that they will not have a mystery they will judge God to be a God that does not hide himself; but that while he proclaims himself a Saviour, he should leave nothing still hidden. Whereas, though known as a Saviour, he is yet a God that hideth himself in many particulars, and in this among the rest. There is honesty in his invitations, "Look unto me and be ye saved." There is honesty in the statement, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Why will ye die?" There is honesty in the command, "Repent and believe the Gospel, and ye shall be saved." There is honesty in the promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;" and there is truth in the statement, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And here is a mysterious connexion between the possession of the outward means, and the reception of the inward power. It is in the means, and yet not invariably in the means. "Faith cometh by hearing;" yet not to all that hear. How is this? God, verily thou dost hide thyself from us. And shall we refuse these facts upon the face of revelation, because the admission of them involves us in a mystery? Let me ask again, where is the superior discernment of this, where is the judgment in this case: to blot out these pages from the Bible, because they involve us in a mystery by their admission—or again to admit that we are as little children, and to receive the facts of our divine philosophy? The facts of our divine philosophy, are the verses and the chapters of this book; and he is no philosopher who would reject a single fact, because it involved him in a difficulty, or opposed some previous theory. Nay, how is all sound philosophy followed, and prosecuted unto truth, but by holding men's theories in abeyance, under the command of fresh facts, so that fresh facts shall rectify theories, and theories shall be prostrated before facts? And so should men's judgment be before verses of the Bible; for these are facts from God.

Now one expression more, one topic briefly touched upon, is necessary here, I perceive: for the force of the moral demonstration I am offering you step by step, evidently rests on the reception of this book as God's revelation. If a man say, "I deny these verses are revelation," the subject matter of the dispute is altogether changed immediately. I should only say of such persons, or of such a state of things, at present, that the evidence for the revelation is not mysterious. The evidence for the fact of the revelation is let down to the men; it stands on historical testimony; it stands in its miraculous authority before the eyes of men, corroborated by facts, and handed down by authentic testimony. It stands in such a moral demonstration, connected with the character of the first promulgators of the truth, as involves the men who deny the revelation in greater absurdity of credulousness, than those who receive it.



But that is not our present subject ; it is a separate and important subject in its own place. All I am concerned to say about it at present, is, that the evidence for the origin of the revelation is not mysterious ; it is let down within the reach of human science and human inquiry, and any man who refuses to inquire about it, and denies it in ignorance, deserves the consequences.

Here, then, my brethren, I have invited you to contemplate God in these four aspects in which he is set before us : some statements in each made clear, brought forward into the front ground of the picture ; and in each a mystery hanging, in the dimness of the horizon, upon us. And what would we have as creatures ? Would we stand upon such a pinnacle, that there shall be no horizon ? “ Vain man would be wise, though he be born like the ass’s colt : ” and because he has intelligence enough to perceive that there is a mystery, and pride enough to refuse to submit to it, he abuses the reason and intelligence in the pride of refusing what he might know, because he cannot know what God still keeps secret. Be ye reconciled to mysteries ; and be ye satisfied with revelation. These are the statements, my brethren, this is the view of things, this is the combination of truth, for which our forefathers bled in this land : without attempting to explain the mysteries, they asserted and re-asserted the facts of the case. You find them in the formularies of the Church :—the person of God, declared with simplicity and plainness, and not attempted to be explained ; the sovereignty of God proclaimed with equal simplicity and plainness, in the evident purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus ; the all-sufficiency of the atonement in the blood of Jesus, proclaimed distinctly ; and the mysterious combination of God and man in one person, declared, but not explained ; and the invincible energy of the power of the Holy Spirit in winning the will of the sinner. And being made willing in the day of God’s power, he shall run in the way of God’s commandment, and delight in the knowledge of God himself ; and so go on in good works, arising out of the love of God in his heart, and dictated by the glory of his heavenly Father in this life, unto eternal salvation. I say these are the statements for which our fathers bled in this land ; these are the boundary marks which they have set up for us to exclude “ philosophy falsely so called,” and to exclude, on the other side, the abuses of the mystery to which I briefly alluded at first, by heaping up more mysteries, and more Mediators, which the Romish system had so largely introduced. Armed on both sides we are in the formularies of the Church, we have, in truth, been but exhibiting in a more enlarged form, and rendering with more distinctness to your understandings, as God hath permitted me, the statements which are compressed into an attitude of defence against heresy in the formularies of the Church. Hold them fast : meddle not with them who love to change such truths. My brethren, it is most deplorable to think how the best things become abominable, when abused by man’s mismanagement ; and there is no instance of this more deplorable than the way in which these very formularies of the Church have been abused—the way in which the Church itself has been abused—the way in which that, which ought to have been for the salvation of the united empire, has, through negligence, through slothfulness, through pride, through unbelief, through worldly-mindedness, become the cause of contention and is likely to be the cause of strife, and even danger in the land.

You are aware of the sentiments it has pleased God to allow me to utter in

this place, to many of you who were present on the late occasions. Now, my dear friends, I desire exceedingly to bear in mind myself, and to call the attention of our fellow-men throughout this land, were it in my power so to do, to the retribution of Divine Providence in the alarm that is spread, and the danger that hovers over the Church in the sister kingdom. How frightfully she has neglected her duty! With what awful apathy hath she sat by while millions of her fellow-creatures were ignorant of the language, the only language they could speak, without making a vigorous ecclesiastical effort to preach the Gospel to the people in their own tongue! How hath she reposed in her ease and quietness within her various mansions, while hundreds and thousands of the people have been like sheep going astray without a shepherd, or left to the prowling wolves who would devour and rend them! And now, when the retribution comes, when the hand of God is turned to chastise the neglected daughter, now an alarm, and next an outcry is raised. And truly, my dear brethren, the negligence deserves chastisement: but negligence in a child, and a child that is our own, a child of the same family, of the same sentiments, based on the same foundation, belonging to the same Father with ourselves—negligence does not call for destruction. For amendment; chastisement unto amendment is a righteous thing. We see in the progress how God works: he is a God that “hideth himself” from those that will not see; but in his ways there is a revelation to those who will see. We see the righteous retribution of Providence, the trouble coming where negligence has been long practised. You find it in your own affairs, in your relative and domestic condition, throughout all your business: if in any particular you have been negligent, if, after repeated warnings, you have continued negligent, be sure thy sin will find thee out; domestic trouble relative losses, failures in business, disappointment among friends—these will be the inevitable consequences of continued negligence in business, or inattention to the practical duties of friendship. And the Church as a body is no exception to this rule: let negligence be practised more and more, let warnings be rejected, let neglect be persevered in, in despite of warning, and the secret reproaches of conscience; and I say, God forbid that our Father should not chastise. If we were left to ourselves we should be ruined. I believe it is in the righteous chastisements of a wise and watchful Father that the preservation of the child consists.

You are aware of the peculiar object connected with our present meeting together in this place, as regards the continuance and ease of your assembling yourselves together here, and the relief of this place of worship from a debt that still hangs over it. It is connected with what I have been saying. If the truth I have been telling you is the truth preached from this place; if this be (as we believe it is) a member of the Church we belong to, the formularies of the Church honoured here, the truth of God proclaimed within these walls—then, brethren, by all the value you set upon this truth, I would again avail myself of this last lingering opportunity of addressing you (it may be) for a considerable period, to ask your liberality to free this place from this incumbrance. The days of large endowments seem to be at an end. Men talk of despoiling the Church of her endowments, but we hear of few who endow her afresh as some of our forefathers endowed her. There have been men of large possessions in this world, who have built such places as this, and larger place than this, from their own

private resources. Sacrifices they must needs have made; but they had a Master who recompensed them for the loss, if it could be called a loss. Alas, how closely calculating have our pecuniary sacrifices become for the sake of the Gospel, and with what rigid economy do we dole out help for such occasions as the present!

Bear this reproach, my brethren: it is not said in unkindness to you personally—far from it; but from a feeling in which I participate with shame. While we so talk about what is to be done with the endowments that our forefathers gave, the age of endowments seems to be gone entirely. What! shall the shade of popery rise up, and say with scorn and contempt at our better creed, "*We* were the endowers chiefly; *we* were they that gave thousands to build places of worship; and *you* find it difficult to gather a hundred pounds to clear a debt." Take away the reproach, as far as lies in you, as regards this place at least; and let the collection now made, be made from liberal hearts and loving hearts, to the honour of Him who is worshipped here in spirit and in truth.

My dear friends, I thank God for this renewed, and (as I have already hinted,) for the present, the last opportunity of declaring these truths in your ears. I believe—and not from mere fancy, but from very satisfactory and delightful evidence from time to time conveyed to me—that he hath not suffered me to speak altogether in vain from this place. Hearts there are which have been touched and melted under the truth, and which have thanked God in secret, and who have from time to time given expression of their sentiments to myself also, of what the Lord has done for them under the ministry of the Word from my unworthy lips. Blessed be the Lord God Almighty, the Saviour, for these things! I shall bear an affectionate remembrance towards the flock assembling in this place: and I would affectionately entreat you to bear me upon the sacrifice and service of your faith before God; that, in the large and populous sphere where I am now called to labour\*, God would help me with great power and teaching of his Holy Spirit to speak the truth in the love of it, with singleness of heart, to honour God, and to desire the salvation of all who shall be entrusted to my charge. Dear Christian friends, pray that it may be so: and I beseech our God, in the tender love of his dear Son Jesus Christ, to minister to all your hearts in all the affectionate anxieties that you feel in private about your friends and relations; in all the trembling apprehensions that you experience for your own souls; in all your doubtfulness respecting his truth, and labouring study of his word: praying for divine teaching, in all the difficulties of your relative situations, in all the turmoil of necessary business, and the frequent interruptions of those meditations which compose your chiefest joy: that in all these things, and the variety of the plague of the experience of the inner man in every believing soul, the unction of the Holy One may be full, and rich, and powerful, preserving you from all evil, making you diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, with all prayer and supplication for all saints—with prayer for all that are in authority, for our king, for those who rule under him, for all ministers of religion; that we may be godly and quietly governed, and in all possess a patience under the various provocations of domestic life; that you may have self-possession, self-command, self-denial,

\* St. Mary's Church, Liverpool.

that the various little difficulties which thwart and distress from day to day, may be warded off by a willingness to yield, as far as truth will permit you, for peace sake. As far as lieth in you, my beloved brethren, be at peace amongst yourselves, be at unity amongst yourselves. Bear with one another, remembering that uniformity is not necessary to unity. Oh, bear with one another. There are diversities far more than in men's hearts who love the truth. You are nearer one another than you think, in conversation after: the proof is, when you kneel down to pray, how much more closely are you held together than when your conversation is controversial. Oh let there be more, then, of the unity of the Spirit among you, and less of willingness to discover differences. There is strength in unity: be strong in the unity of holiness among yourselves. Oh, refrain from all sin, refrain from all falsehood, from all misrepresentation in society, from all exaggeration of reports, from all slandering, from all traducing of a neighbour behind his back.

I beseech you, brethren, be ye holy, for God is holy. Walk closely with God, be much in private, secret prayer: as much as lieth in you in your various situations of life; even in the midst of necessary business, let your hearts stir up with ejaculatory prayer, catching a blessing from God every hour of the day. Walk with God.

And what shall I say more? The time would fail me to give utterance to what my heart contains to my Christian friends. Dear brethren the peace of God, with all that that contains, of the great God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the blessing which is richly laden in Christ Jesus in our nature, which is conveyed in faith, which is applied and experienced in, and by the Holy Ghost, the blessing of God which brings his love down, which draws your love upwards, which assimilates you to him, which conforms your character to his, and gives the mind that was in Jesus to the members of Jesus; the blessing of God which bringeth heaven upon earth, that it may take you and make you heirs of heaven—the blessing of God be amongst you!

And if there be a man or woman here present who is yet a stranger to these things, and knows not the power of this grace, may God, in his infinite mercy, render what I have now been permitted to say a blessing to such one. Let a mystery be recognized; let objections be given up; let the vain strugglings of a proud understanding be prostrated; oh, let your hearts be touched. Fellow sinner, believe in God, believe also in Jesus: yield to your own conscience; seek the Holy Ghost—ask, and ye shall receive, for God is true.



## GOD'S CARE FOR HIS CHILDREN.

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RIGHT REV. CHARLES RICHARD SUMNER, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF  
WINCHESTER.

RAM'S CHAPEL, HOMERTON\*, MAY 4, 1834.

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"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."—MATTHEW, xviii. 14.

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It would be difficult for the imagination to conceive a scene more solemn and affecting, than that which was exhibited when our Lord uttered these gracious words. There was there one "made lower than the angels;" "a man of sorrows," meek, and lowly, and without a place to lay his head. Around him pressed the disciples, uninstructed as yet in the truths of the spiritual religion, and slow of understanding to comprehend the nature of their Divine Master's teaching, with pride in their hearts, and strife on their tongues, and eagerly questioning, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In the midst stood a little child, placed there by Jesus himself, a fit sign and emblem of *humility*; the important lesson which he intended to deduce from the unseemly contest which had arisen. We can picture to ourselves the astonished disciples, standing like newly awakened men; their dream of ambition vanished, their eyes opened to the real character of those who were to be the lowly followers of the cross, while doctrines so strange and humiliating fell from the lips of their heavenly Teacher:—"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The pretensions of each would be silenced successively, as the candidates for honour were reduced to their proper level. The keys of Peter, already given, would fall from his hands, as conveying no claim to the desired distinction: Judas, though he bare the bag, would feel his title forfeited: Simon and Jude, would reap no advantages as Christ's brethren according to the flesh: Andrew, none as being first called. the beloved Disciple himself would be made conscious that he could challenge no place of priority as a right, because he leaned on his Lord's bosom. The kingdom of heaven, our Lord taught them, was for the little children, meek and lowly in heart, "as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby." The promise was to them, "If *children* then heirs:" for these God created, and provided with an everlasting love: he sought them, as a shepherd for the missing sheep from his flock upon the mountains; none shall pluck so much as a single soul out of their Father's hands. "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

These words, brethren, suggest several distinct considerations, which I would desire to bring before you, in connexion with the appeal on behalf of those

\* For the Ram's Chapel Charity Schools.



schools, for which your charitable aid is this day requested. May the Holy Spirit, the only wise and true teacher, quicken and enlighten our understandings, and write upon our hearts, and upon the hearts of all the children educated in these schools, and on the hearts of all their parents and friends, that wisdom which alone maketh wise unto salvation.

The text implies, first, THE EXISTENCE OF THINGS WHICH PUT IN PERIL THE SOULS OF THEM THAT MAY BE THE CHILDREN OF GOD. If man were walking in Eden, he might step upon the flowers which bestrew his path, without dread of encountering some poisonous reptile beneath the cover. If sin had not made this world a wilderness, he might go on his way rejoicing, without risk of harm from the lion in the way, or the ambush of the enemy lying in wait to take his life. But, in the actual state of things, perils encompass man on every side, even from his cradle. No sooner is he born into the world, than he has too much reason to find, that he has not been ushered into a friendly country, where all is fair, and smiling, and peaceful; where the intentions of all who surround him are kind and beneficent, as may be those of his earthly parent, or his nurse who watches him; where he will be considered by no opposing interests, be crushed by no selfish feelings, be misled by no evil example. Pain comes to try his temper: self-indulgence makes him seek his own gratification at the expense of others: passion hurries him into violence: temptation calls from without, corruption answers from within: and Satan, who is as a serpent for subtilty, and as a lion for strength, finds too often, an unresisting prey; and adds another ruined soul to the long list of the victims which it has been his pleasure to devour ever since sin entered into the world, and death by sin.

But I need not particularize; there is not an hour during the imprisonment of the soul of man within this fleshly tabernacle, that innumerable spiritual dangers do not hang over it, meet it in every scene, encompass it in every stage of its existence, and cease to assault it only with the cessation of life itself. Every man knoweth the plague of his own heart. Is there here one ignorant of it? Oh, let me beseech him to descend into its inmost recesses, and search there, and see, and try himself, and then he will find that his own experience, if fairly tried, his own experience will remind him of his own particular bitterness, and most besetting sin.

But, secondly, IT IS CONTRARY TO GOD'S WILL THAT THESE DANGERS SHOULD BE FATAL TO THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE. They prevail, alas, too frequently, notwithstanding the rich provision of God's inexhaustible mercy in Christ Jesus, his unbounded love, his long-suffering and waiting to be gracious, his repeated offers of free-forgiveness and preventing grace, his expostulations and warnings, his fatherly reproofs, and his healing chastisements. But God desireth not the death of the sinner; he rejoiceth over one sinner that repenteth. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." What an evidence he has given of this truth in redeeming him from the curse of the law; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." "Herein perceive we the love of God, because he laid

down his life for us." What an evidence he has given of the same truth in the privileges he has conferred on the believer in his gift of the Holy Spirit, to keep him from sin, and purify him from the taint of evil, in conferring on him all the blessings of the covenant, and in adopting him into the fellowship of the divine family and household. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The Apostle seems to break out, as it were, into a rapturous exclamation, expressive of the feelings which animated him, and which filled his whole soul with joy and holy love, when he reflects on the unexampled condescension of his holy Father; he calls upon all to come and contemplate with him, with holy gratitude, the love of his Saviour and his God. "Behold," he says, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the Sons of God."

And why is this; but that it is his will, that not "one of these little ones should perish?" Not for any beauty of their own which should call out his love towards them; not because they were exempt in their birth from the taint of corruption and death; not because they differed from their brethren, and like their elder Brother, the Incarnate Son of God, "did no sin, neither was guile found in their mouth." No; "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us," "we love him, because he first loved us." It is nothing but his free will that saves his little ones from the dangers which encompass them. Their deliverance is not bought of man; no, brethren, it cost more to redeem their souls, it cost more to redeem the soul of each one of you who hear me: your souls are not bought of man; they are the gift, the free, the gratuitous gift of God. Their safety is obtained without money and without price, it is the recompense of their Saviour's sufferings here, won by the travail of his soul, and sealed even unto the end, by his precious blood-shedding; "with his own right hand, and with his mighty arm, he hath gotten to himself the victory: "it is his sovereign will, that none of them should be lost whom he calls his "little ones:" his language is, "Father, I will that they also whom thou has given me, be with me where I am."

And this leads me to the third observation, to consider THE MEANS WHICH GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS GRACIOUS WILL, IN THE SALVATION OF THE LITTLE ONES. God is no hard task master; he does not require bricks without straw; and he does not command the people to go up and possess the good land, without furnishing them with arms for the battle, and a Captain to lead them on to the victory. When he says, "It is not his will that one of these little ones shall perish," he does not leave them to struggle single-handed, in a hopeless and unavailing contest, against the enemies which assail them; but he puts into their hands the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith; he puts underneath them his own everlasting arms; and he keeps them as his own, by his own power. He himself has provided a lamb for the sacrifice, as a peace-offering in their behalf: Christ Jesus is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But the great bar to the fulfilment of these gracious designs of God for mankind, is ignorance. Why is it that so many destroy themselves, by living without God in the world; and act as reckless of their souls, as if they had had unfolded to them not a single page of revelation—had sent no Sun of Righteousness to

lighten their darkness and cheer their moral gloom—no Holy Spirit to help their infirmities, and lead them into all truth? The Bible answers this question; “My people is destroyed for lack of knowledge.” And why is it that so many entertain false views of themselves and of God; of their own nature and of the divine decrees—and thus numbers perish in their own corruptions, for whom Christ died? Again, the Scripture answers; “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” And why is it, that so many walk in the vanity of their own minds, and according to their former lusts? For no other cause than because they are ignorant, having the understanding darkened; being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them. Remove their ignorance, and give them knowledge, and you open to them all the magnificent prospects of the Gospel.

Brethren, I am not speaking now of that human knowledge of which we hear so much; I am speaking of that heavenly knowledge, which maketh wise unto salvation; give them this knowledge, and you open to them all the glorious prospects of the Scriptures; you shew the slave of sin how he may burst his prison doors, and shake off the disgraceful fetters which bind his soul: you point out to the child of wrath, the blessings of adoption into the holy family of heaven, the unutterable privilege of the sons of God; you breathe spirit into the dry bones, and quicken the dead soul into newness of life. He who was lost and miserable, an outcast, a stranger, an alien, an enemy; aye, and not only an enemy to God and a stranger to him, but an enemy to the interest of his own soul, a stranger to its best enjoyments, and the glorious designs of God on their behalf. He comes forth under divine teaching a new creature, a new man, renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him, “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Brethren, what a blessed and heavenly transformation is this; what is the Bible to him, whose heart remains so hard and unaffected with its awakening convictions? That very Gospel of life and love is no Gospel to him; it brings no good tidings to his benighted soul; the Saviour, who came to seek and save that which was lost, becomes no Saviour to his cold and reluctant soul. It is no better to him than a sealed book and a dead letter. The revelation of the Lord of Life himself, is not a savour of life unto life, but of death unto death. He perishes in his ignorance and blindness of heart, though God himself has proclaimed aloud to sinners, that he wills not that “one of these little ones should perish.”

I notice, lastly, THE ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH THE TEXT AFFORDS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIROUS OF IMPARTING THAT KNOWLEDGE WHICH MAKETH WISE UNTO SALVATION. In promoting this object, we know, we are sure, that we are promoting God's will: he wills not, “that one of these little ones should perish.” In removing the stumbling block of ignorance from our brother's path, we may be satisfied that we are engaged in a labour of love, agreeable to the divine purposes: we become in a measure fellow-workers with God; our occupation is congenial with that of Christ himself. He came to *teach* eternal life as a Prophet, as well as to *give* it as a King. And how much of hope and holy confidence does this thought infuse into the heart of the Christian parent? Brethren, I am addressing here many Christian parents; they will know something of the nature of those emotions and feelings to

which I allude. When they teach their children to lift up their hands to Jesus, and lay them at the foot of the cross from their earliest years, and form their infant tongues to cry betimes for that mercy, which is the want alike of our earliest and latest years, what a comfort is it to such Christian parents to remember, that in their own little ones, they see those whom God wills should not perish: what life does it add to their prayers in their behalf; what energy to their wrestling with their heavenly Father, that he would perfect praise out of the mouths of their own babes and sucklings. They know that it is written, "The times of their ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men to repent:" here there is a motive for instilling into the troubled heart of their child the consoling doctrines of the Gospel; God cares for him; cares for the child of the Christian parent; God cares for that child, and wills not that he should perish. Is there a parent that could bear the reflection, that so far as in him lay, he was counteracting—aye, so far as his child's interests were concerned, dearer to him, perhaps, than himself—was counteracting the Divine will in his behalf? Christ has died for that little one; and he commanded that he should be brought to him: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

But, surely, I may take the opportunity of calling the attention of parents to the many instances, which even a limited experience furnishes, of the early susceptibility of children on religious subjects. Bear with me for a moment, brethren, on this subject; it is one of exceeding importance to all those to whom the care and the nurture of the young is entrusted. I am well aware that much care is needful to guard against the mere talk and profession of religion: but it surely belongs to the training of a child in the way in which he should go, that religion should bear a prominent part in education, even from the very first. We know not how the Spirit of God works upon the infant mind; neither can we understand his operations upon our own minds: the same divine power can effect the same blessed change on both. And our baptismal service, so firmly founded on Scripture, must be a delightful encouragement to a believing parent. If the blessings of redemption may extend "Far as the curse is known;" faith may confidently expect the sanctifying influences of the Spirit even from the earliest years. Why this is not always realized, is another question; and brings our responsibility before us, as parents, in a very affecting point of view. But on this subject I must not now touch; it is enough for us to know, that however great and extensive our responsibility may be, as parents, or as the friends and promoters of religious education, we have adequate resources: we are not straitened in our God; we cannot make too large a demand on him, either for ourselves, or for the little ones dear to us. It is our comfort under every anxious care for them, to hear his gracious voice, saying, "Fear not; only believe: be it unto thee according to thy faith." Oh, may every Christian parent listen with gladness to the gracious words, obey the call, and bring up their little ones, even from the very cradle—yea, from the very cradle; it may be done, it has been done, it will be done, by Christian parents to the end of time—in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

But the text has a word of exhortation, not only to parents in respect of their children, but also *for Christians in general in behalf of their perishing brethren*. Nay, it does more, it enjoins a duty, while at the same time it



encourages us in its performance. God will not have his people leave their ignorant brethren to perish in their ignorance. He pronounces a solemn denunciation against those who take away the key of knowledge. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye enter not in yourselves; and them that were entering in, ye hindered." Doubtless there are many here, who have acknowledged this duty; and who are aware, that their duty extends in this respect far beyond their own immediate family, and the sphere of their own domestic circle of intercourse. Love knows no bounds of time or place; it is large and liberal, as the divine source from whence it flows. Whoever, then, is in want of Christian teaching, he is our neighbour; wherever there is one perishing in his ignorance, he is our brother: wherever there is a soul to be found, who knows nothing of the strong consolations of the Gospel, there we have found one of those little ones which God would not have us leave to perish. Unhappily we need not look far for objects for our Christian care; we have only to take our course, as we are doubtless frequently obliged to do, through the streets of the busy metropolis, to see how many there are who as yet know not God, and know nothing of that Saviour who would call them to himself, that they should not perish. Brethren, it is one of the most painful parts of the duty of those who are endeavouring to advocate the cause of Christian education, that they are compelled in their progress to this church, and to that church, to witness the appalling scenes which are presented to their view throughout their journey. In coming hither this morning, I could not see the many little ones, evidently left to themselves, without one Christian friend to call them from their paths of sin, and knowing nothing of the joys and privileges, of the rest and instruction, and all the other blessings, of the Christian Sabbath, I could not see all these distressing instances of that ignorance which yet prevails, even in a Christian land, without reflecting, with gratitude and with joy, on the benefits to which the children of these schools are admitted, through the Christian care and kindness of those who contribute the means for their education. I trust they know their blessings; I trust the Holy Spirit has taught their hearts to lift up their infant tongues in prayer to God who has thus blessed them: I trust that there are many amongst them, who, like Lydia, have attended to the things which have been spoken to them of their Christian teachers: I trust there are among them, too, some like young Timothy who have learned from their earliest years to bow the knee to Jesus; aye, and not the knee only, but who have sought him in spirit and in truth, and have come before him with the offering of a heart which has learned of his salvation.

Brethren, I trust there are many here, who are, according to their means, willing to contribute, it may be, to extend the means of this charity. I rejoice to see, that it is a material consideration with the managers of these schools, to train the children early to habits of piety, industry, and virtue. Let our young be brought up in these principles, and God assuredly will give the increase. You will not ask here, brethren, whether there are others nearer to them, who are willing to take their share in bearing their brethren's burden: Christ was manifested in the flesh, and died for you; when you were yet afar off. You will not put the taunting question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The commandment is, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." You



will not peril the never-dying souls of your brethren in your selfishness and want of Christian love; "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." "Freely ye have received, freely give." - "Cast your bread upon the waters;" sow in faith. What though there be those who, notwithstanding all your care, and all the promises of the Gospel, yet remain ignorant of the things which concern their eternal peace; if you have thus cast your bread upon the waters, you must leave it to God to give the increase: he will give it in his own time: he often gives it at times, and through means, most unexpected. Cast, then, your bread upon the waters; plant in the morning, plant in the evening, for ye know not which shall prosper. Lend unto him who careth for the souls of each one of the lowest and humblest of his creatures; and who has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these little ones, ye have done it unto me."

## CHRISTIANITY A PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DENIAL.

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REV. J. LEIFCHILD.

POULTRY CHAPEL, JUNE 18, 1834\*.

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“And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”—MARK, viii. 34, 35.

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THESE words describe the requisition which Christianity makes upon every one who professes to receive it. They reveal the principle on which the Christian character is formed, and by the cultivation of which it is promoted and matured. This principle is the denial of self, in its carnal and earthly state, for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s; that is, out of love to his person, regard to his authority, and desire for his honour, by the preservation and advancement of his religion in the world.

It was not the only time that Jesus Christ uttered these words. We find him often repeating them, at least in substance. On one occasion he states them most seriously: he says, “If any man will come after me, and hate not his father and his mother, and his wife, and his sister, and brother, yea and his own life also”—that is, unless he love these less than me—“he cannot be my disciple.” And on another occasion, when the Apostles appealed to their state of destitution in proof of the sincerity of their attachment to him, saying, by Peter, “Lo, we have left all, and followed thee;” Jesus Christ commended the principle, and shewed that this was the true way to happiness and glory: “And he said, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or wife, or brother, or sister, for the kingdom of God’s sake, but shall receive manifold more in the present life, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

You see, then, that the principle of Christianity is a principle of the denial of self, in its carnal and earthly state, from superior motives. It is virtually and essentially, a spirit of sacrifice or surrender; a giving up of the carnal for the spiritual, of the earthly for the heavenly, of the temporal for the eternal. He that has none of this principle is no Christian; and the more we have of it the more Christian we are, the higher will be our religious attainments, the greater our moral dignity, and the richer our eternal felicity in heaven.

This is our subject; and it has been chosen for discussion on the present occasion, because of the intimate connexion of the propagation of true religion by Christians with the furtherance of it in themselves; two things that should always go together, and that have a mighty influence the one upon the other

\* Anniversary Sermon for the Baptist Missionary Society.

The voice of prophecy assures us, that the enlargement of Christianity in the world, *intensively* and *extensively*, will be contemporaneous.

We propose to lay before you, in the first place, SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE PRINCIPLE THAT HAS BEEN MENTIONED WILL BE EVINCED AND MANIFESTED IN THE FORMATION AND PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. The absolute necessity for divine grace is supposed and taken for granted all along, both in the formation of the principle, and in every subsequent step of the process.

First, the principle we have mentioned will be manifested in *the denial of our own opinions in religion, for the authoritative announcements of Scripture*. The Gospel, brethren, enters into no compromise with us about the propriety of its sentiments; it appeals, indeed, to our reason for the evidence of its divine origin; and most frequently and generally it convinces us of this by the impressions of its power upon our hearts, and the close agreement we are led to perceive, in consequence, between its dictates and the wants of our nature and condition, and the dictates of conscience. But this being admitted, the statements of the Gospel are to be received by us on that ground—the ground of their divine authority. It condescends, indeed, to reason and argue out some of its truths before us, as to the grounds of their fitness and evidence: but other of its truths it does not so argue; they are the topmost boughs of the tree of life, whose fruits and results are apparent to us, but not their relations, and the ground of their fitness and propriety: and these must be received solely on the veracity of their Author. Wherever our previous opinions contradict these, which they will do in a variety of instances, they must be given up for them, and sacrificed by us at the shrine of the divine authority. However long they have been cherished, and however carefully they have been formed—though they should have been derived from a long train of ancestry, or have been taught us by some favourite school, or have been the result of deep and careful investigation, they must be given up for these. To be saved entirely by the righteousness of another, to be indebted for our virtue and holiness entirely to the grace of another, apart from which the most diligent use of the means would be utterly vain, and yet to use the means as diligently as though all depended upon that: these are parts of the divine plan for our salvation; they are those to which all our natural sentiments are adverse: but they must be given up for these, because of their divine origin. All other sentiments must be subdued and effaced by them, on account of their supreme authority, as the impressions of insects are obliterated by the trampling of the elephant. The mind must be cleared of all other produce, that these seeds may enter in and take root. We must be *moved* and *swayed* by these sentiments of divine authority, if ever we are saved.

Let us beware, my brethren, of misapplying reason; let us never think of testing the propriety of truths stated to us on the naked authority of the word of God. If we believe him only where we can see the truth and propriety of what he states, we do him no honour; we do not honour him in that case more than we do the testimony of one of our fellow creatures, which testimony we should be ready to receive on the same grounds. But we owe to God the submission of the whole man, of our understanding to his understanding, in the affair of

doctrine, as well as of our will to his will, in the affair of precept; and it must be so, or we cannot be saved. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child cannot enter therein." There must be a denial of our own opinions in religion for the authoritative announcements of Scripture.

Secondly: this principle will be manifested in *the denial of social and worldly advantages, for the sake of conformity to Christ and obedience to his precepts*. We are all naturally worldly: the things of this world strike upon our senses, and insinuate themselves into the heart: they link our desires with them, and fill the soul with solicitude about them. In the absence of all better good, as the object of knowledge and pursuit, from the active and restless energy of our nature, the mind employs itself incessantly about these. Hence we become rooted in the world: it is here we build up our happiness, and here we look for our portion: the spirit that is formed in us is the spirit of the world. But the Gospel combats this spirit; it seeks to fill us with solicitude of a different kind—for the welfare of the soul; about an interest in spiritual objects, in spiritual good, and in a spiritual and future world. "Ye are not of the world," says Jesus Christ to his disciples, "because I am not of the world; I have given you another spirit; walk according to its dictates; be followers of me in the regeneration."

But in pursuing this course, we must lay our account with opposition; sometimes from the counsels of our own flesh and blood; sometimes from the remonstrances of carnal friends and relatives; and sometimes from the enmity of the carnal mind of others, mortified by our condemnation of their opinions and practices, and our contravention of their will. It is very true this opposition may not proceed to the same extent as in the early days of Christianity, when it was a new religion, and had the whole heathen world against it, even in profession. But now, where it is generally professed, the contrast arising from the reception of its spirit is not so marked and glaring, does not appear in so small and despicable a minority, and does not call forth the ebullition of the world's rage; the principle of the denial of social and secular advantages for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, therefore, may not be put to so severe a test in us as in the first Christians. But to a test it will be put; and it may, in some cases, be put to a severe one. We may be opposed in the whole of this course by friends the most dear to us, whose authority over us is next to that of God, or who have the greatest influence over our temporal interests. What we call our duty to Christ—such as keeping holy his day, attending upon the faithful preaching of his Gospel, according to the dictates of our own conscience and experience—uniting ourselves to his sincere, but despised, followers—making his approbation, through obedience to his precepts, the grand concern of our lives—all this we may be told, is ignorance, fanaticism, enthusiasm: we may be charged with self-willedness, and rebellion against all the tender sentiments of nature, or against lawful and constituted authority; and the proud world may lift its haughty head, and shake it at us in defiance, and may tell us, that if we will persist in this course we shall suffer for it. Very well; here is the trial: and woe to us if we are not able to bear it. If the Spirit in us be not mightier than that which is in the world, we cannot be Christ's disciples. Should we renounce our convictions for this cause, we make a miserable exchange; we barter heaven for earth, and salvation for destruction. And if we only hesitate, if we begin to com-



promise matters, and to seek to please these worldly persons, as far as we can, without openly disobeying Christ, we forfeit his approbation; our religion will pine away, and we shall walk in fetters all our days. No man can serve two masters of opposite characters; "for either he will love the one and hate the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Although, therefore, the yearning bowels of a tender mother, and the grey hairs of an indulgent father, should be pleaded as motives to induce us to break the least command of the holy Jesus; and although the authority of natural, civil, and ecclesiastical governors, should be employed to tempt us to do what Christ forbids; and although that authority should seek to allure us by the proffers of highest honours and rewards, or attempt to frighten us by fearful menace; if for the gratification of self or them, we should be moved by these considerations, and do what God's word and our own conscience assure us is displeasing to Christ, and contrary to his command—then must it be evident, that we love ourselves, or them, more than we do Him, that we are not worthy of him, and cannot be his sincere disciples.

This was the principle which made the martyrs. Cases occurred where the fathers and mothers of the victims of persecution, condemned to the stake, went and persuaded them to forego their allegiance to Christ, and united their authority with that of the civil power, to compel compliance with its wish: but the victims had learned the spirit of the text. "Whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it," was their motto: they were as deaf, therefore, to the pleadings of parental tenderness, as they were to the stern mandate of civil authority, and surrendered their souls to Christ with a pure conscience. And so, with regard to principle, every Christian is a martyr; and if he have the true principle of Christianity, he will find it rising in him in proportion to the demand upon it; and if called to it, would make him a martyr indeed. He has the spirit of the martyr without his fires. Thus the principle we have noticed is manifest in the denial of social and secular advantages for the sake of allegiance to Christ, and obedience to his precepts.

Thirdly: this principle will be manifested in the denial of our own love of ease, and quiet, and affluence, for the service of Christ and the Gospel. Over and above the obedience which every Christian renders to the precepts of Christ, as necessary to salvation, he owes him a grateful portion of service, for being delivered and saved by him: and if by his talents, or by his circumstances, or by impressions upon his spirit, by the voice of Providence, or the judgment of the Church, he be called to devote himself *entirely* to the service of Christ and the Gospel, he is bound to obey it. And where this is not the case, every Christian, by the common principles of his religion—love to Christ, desire for his glory, and sympathy for his fellow-creatures, whom he now perceives to be perishing without the Gospel—is bound, according to his measure and his means, to assist in its propagation; and either he must lay aside his principles, or, to be consistent, he must engage in this work. But, then, what a denial does this involve! That love of ease, that disposition to slothfulness, after having attained our own personal salvation, which are so natural to us, must be laid aside for active endeavours to teach the ignorant, to diffuse the knowledge of Christian principles, and to detect and expose to others the numerous wiles of



the great adversary, by which he seeks to lead silly souls captive. And that criminal fondness for peace with men of all principles, which moves many a dastardly Christian, in order that others may permit him to go on his way without molestation, to permit them to go on theirs; and which peace he cannot maintain with a wicked world, but at the expense of fidelity to his Lord and Master; that must be renounced; and at the hazard of forfeiting their friendship, and provoking the ebullitions of their rage, we must bear a faithful testimony to the truth among them, if we are good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Again, that tenacious grasp of property which is so natural to us, and which moves so many to go on perpetually accumulating, beyond all need, for themselves and their families, that tenacious grasp must be relaxed, and there must be a disposition within us, with reference to the superfluous parts of our property, to loose them and let them go, whenever it shall be shewn that the Lord hath need of them. And thus, by contributing to the furtherance of those principles of truth and righteousness, in their outward form, by which the empire of moral evil in this world is opposed by the power of truth, we may be fighting against that moral evil, virtually, in distant parts of the earth, without stirring from our own abode. And woe to us, if in these various ways, we do not deny ourselves for the service of Christ and the Gospel. Jesus Christ, my dear brethren, has committed us, and all his other disciples and imitators, to a warfare with moral evil in all parts of the world, by means of the Gospel; nor can we withhold it with impunity. Oh, my brethren, we shall all of us soon appear before the Captain of the spiritual army; and if we cannot present ourselves in the attitude of warriors, we shall be denied to mingle in the joys and congratulations of victors.

Fourthly, and lastly: this principle will be manifested in *the denial of our own honour, for the honour and glory of our Sovereign and Saviour*. The end of all our actions in religion must be the promotion, not of our own honour, but of the honour of Christ and his grace. How eminently was this the case with the Apostles. Although they devoted their whole lives to the service of Christ and the Gospel, and the benefit of their fellow-creatures, they did it from the most disinterested motives. They sought not their own glory: when honour was proffered to them, they refused it; they found it much more difficult to reconcile themselves to admiration than to scorn. They could not bear to be admired for virtues not their own, or for success wrought by a power foreign to themselves. They turned it, therefore, away; "Not I, but the grace of God that was with me," was their constant language. To uncommon exertions and sacrifices, they were moved by no influence common to humanity; neither by the love of wealth, nor the love of fame, but by the nobler principle of love to Christ; that constrained them; "because," said they, "we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should henceforth live not unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." The end of all their actions, and all their sufferings, was, that every crown which was earned and won, might be placed on His head who wore for them the crown of thorns; that Christ might be magnified in their mortal bodies, whether in life or death; if to live, by their labours; if to die, by their sufferings and their blood, as the seals to his truth

But did not the Apostles count on *posthumous* fame? Did they not know

that they would be held in admiration by all succeeding generations? And has not this motive been sufficient to prompt men to the greatest achievements, the most heroic sacrifices, and the most diligent efforts in art and science? Have they not been content to throw themselves for renown upon all future ages? I reply, that if the Apostles thought of this at all, which it does not appear from their writings they ever did, they must have known, that as long as the world proceeded upon the same principles, it would treat their names with the same contempt that it had treated their persons; they must have known that none would honour them, but they who became possessed of the same principles, and that the honour they would give, would not terminate on them, but ascend to their Master; that it would be honour to them only as instruments, but to him as the Agent—honour to them only as the earthen vessels, for the sake of the rich treasures with which they were filled, while the excellency of its power would be ascribed to God their Saviour, by the Church in all ages. They must have known that, and they wanted no other honour; with that they were content.

Dear brethren; this is the principle of Christianity. By ascribing our salvation to the righteousness of another, and our holiness to the grace of another, it takes us forth from the root of self, and grafts us into Christ, the Living Vine, that all the fruit we bear may be to his glory. So far as our actions in religion proceed from a desire to obtain human notice and applause, Christianity denies to them the praise of real excellency; she counts them to be tainted by the motive from which they spring; and, however fair and specious in appearance, reckons them but as the apples of Sodom—empty, and nothing worth. Christianity, while it provides for the most diligent endeavours on our part, the most heroic virtues, the most undaunted sufferings, provides, at the same time, that these should grow upon the root, not of pride, but of humility and self-denial, and the ascription of all the glory that results to another. Am I a father? I must bring up my children, with unremitting assiduity, in the knowledge of the principles of Christ's religion; I must labour to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; not that their virtues may be reflected upon me for my renown, not that they may load my venerated name with their fond applause, but that Christ, my Saviour, may have the honour of saving them, and of being loved by them, and have the sphere of his knowledge, and the swell of his praise, enlarged in the world. So, as a relative, as a neighbour, as a friend, and a member of a Christian society; so as a minister, a missionary, a pastor, a martyr; the object and end of all my labours and sufferings must be, not the aggrandizement of my own name, either while living or when dead, but that Christ may be magnified in my mortal body. "Let my name perish," said Whitfield, "let Christ's name flourish." And thus it is that Christianity accomplishes the noblest victory—the victory over self. It subdues within us the universal passion of love of fame, and supplants it by a nobler principle, a stronger principle of action—the love of Christ. The former detached us from God, and sunk us into ourselves. Fame is the root of our most splendid achievements; but the Gospel, while it calls to achievements more splendid, by taking away the principle of the love of fame, and planting in its stead the principle of the love of Christ, relieves us from our degradation, lifts us from the ruins of the fall, and gives us back to our God.

“ He justly claims us for his own  
 Who bought us with ‘ a price :’  
 The Christian lives to Christ alone—  
 To Christ alone he dies.”

These are some of the ways in which the principle we have noticed will be manifested, in the formation and progress of the Christian character.

Let us inquire, secondly, WHAT ARE THE REASONS THAT RENDER THIS PRINCIPLE NECESSARY, AND THAT JUSTIFY THE REQUISITION FOR SUCH A GIVING UP FOR CHRIST'S SAKE AND THE GOSPEL'S.

The first is *a reason of necessity* ; in order to our safety and our salvation. We are altogether gone out of the way by the apostacy and corruption of our nature, and have become unprofitable. We must, therefore, be wrought into a different form, and upon a different mould, if we are saved. Our own opinions, for instance, in religion, and the way of salvation with God, so far as they are of human origin, must be erroneous. They are treacherous guides for eternity, by following which we shall be sure to be lost ; and therefore they must be given up for the infallible ones of Scripture : the treacherous guides must be sacrificed for the true ones, if we would be conducted in the way to bliss. The same may be said of all the gratifications of our flesh, in reply to the solicitations of our carnal nature. All the ways in which the appetites triumph over reason, and conscience, and the dictates of piety—all of them are fraught with consequences detrimental to our welfare and destructive of our happiness : they leave behind them the sting of remorse, and fearful forebodings of future accountableness and a dread tribunal. Then how can the Gospel benefit us, but by delivering us from these ? How can it save us but by sanctifying us, by reducing the world in us, and establishing another and an opposite interest—the interest of truth and grace. The sacrifices the Gospel requires are essential to our safety and our welfare : there is nothing that it forbids but what would be injurious—nothing that it commands but what our own peace and welfare imperatively call for. To hesitate, therefore, to yield compliance, to refuse compliance, would be to imitate those refractory children who, for the sake of some present gratification, refuse to give up, at the command of a wise and affectionate parent, things detrimental to their health, and destructive even of life. “ He that will save his life shall lose it :” and the reason of the principle is, the absolute necessity of it for our peace, safety, and salvation.

The next is *a reason of grateful imitation and return*. We owe our salvation entirely to the principle of surrender on the part of another. Oh, what did the Eternal Son of God give up for us ! “ Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich.” He was in the form of God ; he had the splendour and retinue of God ; but he “ humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” He became nothing that we might become every thing. Justice receives the immolation, and releases us from its claims. Oh, what benefits spring to us from the cross of Jesus ! It was a tree of torture to him, but it is a tree of life to us ; adorned with clusters of the richest fruit—remission of sins, liberty of access to God, peace of conscience, the first fruits of the Spirit, the guardianship of angels, the protection of Providence, the resurrection of the body, the

heavenly inheritance—all accrue to us from the cross of Christ. There is not a pang of perdition that shall be prevented from wringing my heart with its torture, not a rapture of heavenly felicity that shall thrill through my bosom, not a ray of glory that shall beam upon me, but shall all be traced to the cross, as the centre around which they revolve, the fountain from whence they all spring. To man the bleeding cross has promised all; to man the bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace. “Who gave his life, what gift can he withhold!” Oh, who does not feel inspired with the sentiment of the chorus of the Bengalee hymn—

“To him who dying, redeem’d my soul,  
O my soul forget him not!”

And is it so? Do I owe my redemption, my eternal redemption, to that costly ransom? Then I feel that I am not my own, but am bought with a price, and am bound to glorify God my Saviour, with my body and my spirit, which are his. I am not my own, but the Lord’s. I am the Lord’s by a double tie, not only of obligation, but of affection. I am the Lord’s, not only because he has the right to me which the master has to the slave, whom he has redeemed at an immense price, but because I love him, and feel that he is worthy of my love; and know not how to set any bounds to a love which cannot be too ardent, since it has infinite loveliness for its object. Does he call upon me for sacrifice, does he say to me, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me?” Behold, he sets me the example. Did he give up all that was glorious for me, and shall I hesitate to give up all that is vile for him? I owe him sacrifice for sacrifice, heart for heart, and, if I should be called to it, life for life.

The last is a reason of *spiritual and eternal recompense*. There is no man that hath left house, or father, or mother, or brethren, or sisters, for Jesus’ sake, but he shall receive manifestly more in the present time; and in the world to come life everlasting. What is the recompense for the *present time*? It is sometimes of the same nature with the loss which has been sustained. When God shall see that we have been tried sufficiently, and that it would not hurt us; and that it is necessary to prevent the misconceptions of those who form their judgment according to sense, he will restore to us, even of this world’s good, more than we lost for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s. We shall prove that godliness is profitable to all things, and hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. “The meek shall inherit the earth;” and he will “give us richly all things to enjoy.” I suppose instances are known to most of you in which this has been verified; when, after a scene of trial, with regard to the principle we have noticed, the Christian has had restored to him, even of this world’s goods, more than he had given up for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s.

But, most generally, the recompense is of another nature, of a different and superior kind to that of the loss which has been sustained—a recompense of spiritual, in lieu of earthly good—the favour of heaven, instead of the friendship of mortals; instead of the treasures of the earth, the rich treasures of spiritual grace and consolation; and instead of an earthly kindred, fathers and mothers, brethren and sisters in Christ, who will love us with a love above that of



nature; who will hold a communion with us sweeter than that of nature, and fraught with richer benefits and lasting for ever. No one, on adverting to the change which these Apostles had made in their fishing occupation, and their earthly parentage and kindred, and their home, for the sweet presence of Christ, and the entertainment of their minds by his divine discourses, and the endearments of his friendship, and the promise of his eternal life, can suppose that they had sustained any loss; they had received far more for the present time. And so it is with Christians generally; ask them which have been the seasons of their brightest manifestations of the favour of Christ; and they will tell you the seasons of their hottest persecution. As when Jesus heard that the blind man, whose eyes had been opened, had been cast out of the synagogue for the confession of him, he found him out, and revealed himself to him more clearly. Go and ask Christians when their religious consolation has most abounded? and they will tell you, almost to a man, when their persecutions for Christ have most abounded. The paper, I believe, is yet extant, on which the martyr Smith recorded his experience, in the midst of his sufferings and persecutions for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. His persecutors denied him the use of paper, pen, and ink: but one day, not long before his death, they allowed him, in their presence, to sign a draft on the treasurer of the society in this country; and he seized the occasion, and when he had signed the draft, put down on the corner of the paper in small capitals these figures, as descriptive of his experience at that moment:—2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." He shall receive "manifold more in this present time."

And, it is added, "in the world to come *life everlasting*." There is a peculiar honour reserved in heaven for the sufferers for righteousness' sake; especially if they suffer unto death. For every trial here, a distinct recompense there; for every disgrace here, an additional ray of glory there; for every drop of sorrow here, an exuberant cup of comfort there. "These are they that came out of great tribulation, therefore are they *nearest* the throne; and the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne doth feed them, and doth lead them to fountains of living waters, and doth wipe away all tears from their eyes." They are promoted in the ranks of the blessed; they enter into Christ's joy, and sit down upon his throne, even as he hath overcome, and hath sat down with his Father upon his throne. They have not only life with all the saints, but they have it more abundantly. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

But I apprehend you will be ready to say, "Is not this to impeach the disinterestedness of Christians? After all, it is a denial of self only in order to a greater gratification. It is self-interest and self-love that moves them, after all, in the whole of their proceedings." No, my brethren, the gratification here is not the gratification of self—of sinful, carnal self; but of a principle within us superior to self; a principle that absorbs our will into the will of God; that makes it our highest happiness, and our highest dignity, to give him glory. The enjoyment of heaven will not be the enjoyment of self, but the enjoyment of God; losing ourselves in Him, in light ineffable, that God may be all in all.

"The more thy glories strike mine eyes,  
The humbler I shall lie;  
Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise  
Immeasurably high."

Such is the principle of the Christian character, and such are the reasons which justify its requisitions. Let us, in the third and last place, just glance, very briefly, at THE ADVANTAGES WHICH ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW FROM THE CULTIVATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE, AND THE EXISTENCE OF IT IN HIGHER MEASURES AND DEGREES. It is to be regretted, that in many instances, where the existence of the principle cannot be denied, it is yet so faint in its appearance, and so languid in its operations. There are cases in which it seems difficult to tell what is the principle on which the life moves; but where this is not the case, and the existence of the principle must be admitted, how is it retarded in its operation! And hence the departure from us, in so great a measure, of what constitutes the true glory of the Church; hence such a comparative want of the tokens of the presence and the approbation of the Lord among us; and hence the narrow limits that have hitherto been put to the progress of Christianity. Ah, brethren, we must seek for a revival of the Church, before we can expect the conversion of the world. And when this principle that I have been advocating, shall be strong in the bosom of every Christian, then shall great advantages result, both to the Church of God, and the world at large.

Then, in the first place, *what a much closer agreement will there be between the creeds and sentiments of Christians of different denominations.* Whence that vast diversity of religious sentiment that has split the Church into such innumerable sections, and produced such an excess of religious controversy, to the prevention of that unity of spirit, and that disposition to associate, which are so requisite to any grand operations, to any grand impressions? Is it not owing, in a great measure, to the want of a *thorough* submission of reason to divine revelation? We appeal, in most cases, to our sense of propriety, for the correctness of what the Scripture says; and because we cannot perceive this propriety, and the agreement of it with our principles, we hesitate to receive it, unless under some modified view. Hence the vast diversity of religious sentiments and disagreements among Christians. But when it shall come to be understood, that the sole ground of our receiving what the Scripture says, is not our ability to perceive its fitness or propriety, but the veracity of its Author; and when the habit of systematizing in religion, and making all things agree together, shall be laid aside; and when we shall be content to receive apparent inconsistencies, because stated in the Scriptures, and because we know that God can reconcile them, and will reconcile them, although we cannot; what a death-blow will be given to party spirit and religious controversy! Most questions, would then be reduced to one—What is the exact meaning of the Word of inspiration? That being agreed upon, there will be an end of further disputes, and all angry contention. And is this a thing improbable, unlikely to be expected? Why, we who are converted have the principle now in existence; we must have received *some* truths, at least, of revelation, not on the ground of their fitness, and their propriety, but solely on the ground of their divine authority. We must have submitted our reason to them; we must have

submitted entirely to them ; we must have been moved and swayed entirely by them, on the ground of their divine authority, or we should not have been converted. And let this principle be but carried out to the full extent of its legitimate operation, and then, brethren, what a calm will come upon the Church ; what a cessation will there be of all those nipping winds of controversy about minor points, which have so often blighted the lovely fruits of peace and charity. What a rescue then will there be of time, from the writing and reading of religious controversies, to be employed for a better purpose. Oh, think how much more cordial then will be the association and co-operation of Christians. The strife of Christians about words, to the gratification of Satan, just as the strife of the Greeks among themselves was matter of joy to Priam, the common foe, shall cease ; and Christians, having ended these improper strifes, shall be at leisure to turn their attention to the gathering in of the wanderers, and the conversion of the world.

“Haste, happy day ! that time I long to see.”

And must it not be the necessary result of the strengthening of the principle we have advocated this morning ?

Secondly, *what a greater nobleness and decision will be given to the Christian character, to the comfort of individuals, and to their impression on mankind.* By accommodating ourselves to the views and sentiments of worldly men in religion, as far as we can do it without openly denying Christ, we are going the way, not only to deprive ourselves of religious comfort and progress, but, instead of winning them over to religion, as we pretend, we are going the way to prevent their conversion to the Gospel ; we forbear to give those proofs of the divinity and excellence of our religion, which, while they provoke to opposition, would compel to thoughtfulness, and command admiration. When the worldly persecutor sees he has only to frown and threaten, to make the disciple waver in his allegiance to Christ ; when he has reason to say, “I have only to persevere, and, in spite of all their boasted confidence in the approbation of their Master, I can bend them, in a great measure, to my will ;” is he likely to be impressed by that spirit, is he likely to be struck with the truth or the excellence of religion, so as to seek after it himself ? No, no ; the Church must not *be led* by the world, but must *lead* the world, if ever she would overcome and subdue it. And when this principle shall become universal and strong, when the converts to the truth shall say to all who would oppose them in following their duty to Christ, “Your authority over me in other things is admitted, and your affection is most dear to me ; not the less but the more so now my sentiments have become refined and heightened by Christianity ; yet, if you oppose me in my duty to Christ, you must be denied. My mind is made up ; if allegiance to the Son of God shall forfeit me your protection, if that exile me from your heart and your house, and deprive me of comfort from you during the whole remaining period of my life, then be it so : poverty with Christ is riches, solitude with Christ is the best society, and death for his sake is gain.” Oh, brethren, when this spectacle shall come to be exhibited frequently in the Church of the Son of God, then how will it make opposition to cease, in the conviction of its hopelessness ; how will men be struck with admiration ; how will it be likely to bring over people to its cause, by the co-operation of the Spirit of God,

and make them say, "We will go with you, for we perceive that God is with you Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." It was thus that the martyrs, by the courage they displayed in their death, drew more to the truth than they had done all through life: persons were baptized for the dead, and the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. And when this principle shall be revived in the bosoms of Christians, it will have the same effect on them, and similar results in the world.

And then, *what a death blow will there be to that lust after pre-eminence and authority in the Church*, which has so often been the bane of its prosperity. There is a desire in men to attain dominion over their fellow creatures; to have their opinions bowed to, and their will obeyed, by men often of equal powers and privileges to their own. And that desire is not eradicated in the Church; it lurks in the heart of some of the best of men. The meekest man upon earth, while he has no temptation to it, by being left in the ordinary ranks of Christians, no sooner is elevated into office than he finds the desire awakened within him. Not content with the influence of his office, and the discharge of its duties, he almost immediately begins to abuse it to the purposes of ambition, and self-willedness, or self-glory. And even persons who have no office in the Church, sometimes thrust themselves forward in this way, on account of something in their rank, or condition, or in their imaginary talents and excellences. And if all will be masters, and none will be slaves, what must be the result but strife, and confusion, and every evil work? But I am sure of all spots on the earth, the Church of Christ is the most unfit one for man to play the tyrant upon; where the emblem is a flock of sheep, and the device, "Be ye meek and lowly in heart, in honour preferring one another;" "If any man be your master, the same shall be your servant;" "Call no man master upon earth; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." But when the Christian principle shall become strong in the Church, of denying our own honour for the glory of our common Lord, then there will be an end of all this striving about precedence, and rule, and an end of all those divisions and jealousies in consequence. There will be no Diotrefes then "loving to have the pre-eminence;" there will be then no one minister lording it over another; there will be no Christians then, or set of Christians, lording it over the minister: but every Christian society will present the picture of a well-proportioned body; where all the members are in their proper places, and ready to discharge their proper office; when what the head shall suggest the hands shall be prompt to discharge, and the feet to execute. There then shall be no strife but who shall bring most glory to the common Saviour, a holy rivalry in which to be very successful will inspire no contempt for those who are less so, and inspire only joy for those who are more so; and then the Churches, walking in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and the fear of the Lord, shall be multiplied on every side.

And further, *what a readiness will there then be to make exertions and sacrifices for the spread of the Gospel*; the glory of Jesus Christ occupying that place in the attention of the Church, which has been given to unprofitable speculation. And his honour, being dear to every heart, and the promotion of it, by means of the Gospel, being the obvious way of advancing it; there will then be no want of responding to the call of the destitute villages of our country, and



the waste places of heathenism, saying, "Come over and help us." There will be no need then, as now, of those excitements to missionary zeal which are of a questionable nature; no need of placarded assemblies, and the expensive collection of ministers from various parts, or of those who are distinguished for rank or talent; no need of long harangues and dazzling poetic description, of elaborate reasoning and eloquent appeal, of coloured and exaggerated successes; and all found insufficient to draw forth any number of devoted persons to the work in request; all found insufficient to draw forth the requisite contributions from the wealthy, to say nothing of the degree that should call for sacrifice and surrender. No, no; but when the principle of the denial of our own love of ease, and quiet, and affluence, for the sake of the service of Christ and the Gospel, shall become strong and prevalent in the Church, then there will be only the occasion to say, "The way for the introduction of the Gospel to the heathen is opened; there is a disposition awakened among them to attend to religion, and men are ready to convey it to them; but means of pecuniary resources are wanting;" when they shall be furnished in abundance. There shall be no need to repeat the question, "Whom shall we send?" but it shall be replied to as soon as it is put, and as often as it is put—"Here am I, send me." Then the tide of Christianity shall set in; and the contributions of Christians to the spread of the Gospel shall flow, not languishingly and tardily, but freely, and rapidly, and abundantly; then the wealth of Christians shall be like ripe fruit upon a tree, not waiting for any violent shaking, but ready upon the most gentle pressure to fall into the lap of the Great Owner.

Do I err, my brethren, in ascribing these results to the revival of this principle in the Church of Christ? This is what Christianity has already done. Behold, this is what she actually did when she was in her vigour: then "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; neither did any of them say, that aught of the things he possessed was his own." They went forth freely, taking nothing of the Gentiles; and the word of the Lord was successful in every region round about them, in every place. The quick result was, the conversion of the world to the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when this principle shall return to its vigour, and Christianity regain its strength, the same effects will follow; and the world a second time, more fully and effectually, will yield to her early conqueror.

This is our subject; and it furnishes us with a ground of remonstrance, and a ground of congratulation.

First, a ground of *remonstrance*. We see that Christianity is capacitated to make great characters. It inspires us with all the principles of true greatness; it lays before us a generosity unparalleled in the skies. I see the Lord of glory giving up all for me; I see him raising me, by the means of his truth and grace, from meanness, and degradation, and error, to happiness, holiness, and heaven. I am filled with zeal, and fired with love; I live no longer to myself, but unto Him that died for me, and rose again, in seeking the conversion and benefit of my fellow-creatures by his Gospel. My heart is no longer an island, separated from others, but a continent that is joined with them; into that expanded heart, the voice of misery finds a ready entrance, and excites a prompt attention. Is not this the legitimate influence of Christianity, when properly received? Look at the Apostles of Jesus Christ; where was philanthropy, where benevolence,

—disinterested benevolence, comparable to theirs? They loved the world that hated them; they emptied themselves to enrich others. They resembled those comets, or wandering fires through the skies, having no particular orbit, or system, to benefit, but exhausting themselves to replenish, with life and health, the systems at large; they were men of whom the world was not worthy; such as whom the world never saw before, and never has seen since. And how were their characters formed, but on the legitimate influence of the Christian religion? Is it so, brethren? Is this the direct consequence of the Christian religion? Then what are we to say of the worldly-minded Christian; of those, who, baptized in the name of Christ, are living only for themselves, and their families here? What are we to say of tame Christians, those whom a little difficulty in the service of Christ makes to shrink, and a little danger affrights, and a little discouragement disheartens? And what are we to say of those Christians amongst us in every place, who cry “Lord, Lord,” with their lips, but never do any thing for the cause of God in the earth; never do the thing that he has commanded? Lord, what a shaking off at the last day, will there be of a vast number of this description in the Church, with a “Depart from me, I know ye not.” And of the rest that remain, when we consider how much there is of self-seeking, and doing things for the obtaining of a name. When we think of our petty rivalries, and of the little jealousies of each other, and how we are separated by slight shades of sentiment, and divided one from another—when we think of the difficulty there is to enter with sympathy into the operations and successes of other parties than our own—when we think of the eager contentions that have been manifested about things, confessedly not important or essential to salvation—do we not see that the Church itself needs to be revived? Do we not see, that if we have any part of the particular spirit that belonged to the Apostles of Christ, we have principally the spirit of Peter; and do we not need, as a Church of the Son of God, to be baptized more liberally with the spirit of the Apostle John? The Church must be revived, in order to the conversion of the world.

Then, secondly, here is a ground of *congratulation*. I hope I shall not be supposed to flatter, if on this occasion I offer the humble meed of my commendation to the Baptist Missionary Society. As far as I am acquainted with your proceedings, you have in your conduct, your missionaries, and your servants, supplied some of the best illustrations of the principle advocated this morning. In your conduct, you have avoided, in a great measure, ostentation; and if your assemblies have been less splendid, and less numerous on this account, they have not been the less dignified in the sight of God, nor the less efficient. I hope that you have none of your missionary stations called by your own names. And with regard to your missionaries, they have furnished some of the best instances of devotedness to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am aware of the difference of opinion respecting some of these, but I shall withhold my admiration from no such men as Ward, and Carey, and Marshman, in the East, and from no such men as Knibb, and Coulthart, and Burchell, in the West, and a host of others. When I think of the sufferings of these latter, of the persecutions and imprisonments which they endured, rather than forsake their swarthy converts; when I think of their bold appeal to this country, on behalf of that enslaved race, and of the extraordinary success that has followed; when

I think of their readiness to return to the scene, where they have been so calumniated and ill-treated, and how they long to be fanned by the breeze that shall bear them to the *converts* they have left behind; and when I think of the heroism displayed in many instances among these *converts* themselves—that not only the *missionaries* have manifested a readiness, by the grace of God, to lay down their lives for the sake of the Gospel, but that many of their sable *converts* have manifested such a fortitude in suffering, and such a fidelity to the truth, and such a forgiveness of their bitter adversaries, as almost, I was going to say, imitated that of heaven, and have furnished ample materials for another book of martyrs; I feel, when I consider these things, I am not wrong in representing your society as furnishing some of the best illustrations of the principle I have advocated.

Yours is a denomination which has been honoured by many eminent names; some of whom yet remain, though many of them are gone; men who, for profundity of thought, acuteness of intellect, brilliancy of genius, and zeal for the propagation of the Holy Bible, have rarely been equalled, probably will be never surpassed. But great as that honour is, I think it a greater honour to you, to have such devoted missionaries, and such extraordinary success both in the East and West. And is this a society that Christians of other denominations shall hesitate to sanction and countenance? Is this a society whose resources shall be crippled, and that shall languish in its operations? If it were so, if this society were crippled for want of resources of a pecuniary nature—if it were so through the services of this anniversary, then I am bold to say, it would be a dishonour to the denomination, and a reproach to the whole Christian world.

Dear brethren, (I call you such, separated as I am from you in nothing whatever but a single shade of sentiment; and the preacher that addresses you this morning, and the pulpit that he addresses you from, are guarantees of a unity of spirit and sentiment among us all,)—dear brethren, go forward; I wish you success in the name of the Lord. Go forward, dear brethren, the Lord of Hosts is with you, the God of Jacob is your refuge. Your past successes are—(or if I may not utter a prediction, at least let me breathe a fervent wish)—*may* your past successes be but as the dawn of a bright morning which, however welcome for the light and joy which accompany it, is still more for that of which it is the harbinger, the growing splendour of the meridian day.

## THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST CONSEQUENT UPON BELIEF IN MOSES.

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CAMDEN CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, JUNE 15, 1834.

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“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”—  
JOHN, v. 45—47.

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THE transactions of the day of judgment, as well as the joys and pains of the invisible world, can only be delineated to us under imagery, and by expressions, derived from our present state of being. We do not therefore feel bound to give a literal interpretation to the various statements of Scripture concerning it, though we are sure that the figures employed approach as nearly as consists with our condition whilst on earth, to realities overpassing description. It is thus in reference to the details of trial, when the whole human race shall be congregated at the tribunal of God. There is set before us all the ceremonial of one of our own courts of judicature: the judge is represented as taking his seat, and books are opened, out of which the indictment may be read; and witnesses are summoned, and the prisoners plead, and verdicts are pronounced, and then execution goes forward.

How far this judicial process shall be literally enacted we are not competent to decide: but the great truth which we gather from such representations is, that in the awardments of the future there shall be a most rigid observance of justice; so that no sentence shall be given without the very nicest investigation, and none but on the principles of righteous impartiality. This indeed is the main thing pourtrayed by these sketches: and whether or no there will be any thing analagous to the proceedings of a human tribunal, is a point of little moment. But since these proceedings are made to furnish the imagery by which the transactions of the last day are depicted, we learn assuredly, that the retributive economy under which we are placed, will be wound up with an awful solemnity; and that with every verdict there will be given reasons which shall satisfy the intelligent creation.

But we learn yet more than this general truth, seeing that some important information must be conveyed by the minutest particulars. If we read of the opening of books and of the standing forth of witnesses, we may be sure there will be some testimony against the sinner, which he shall not himself be able to contradict; and that whether by the external evidence, or internal consciousness, he shall be forced to confess the sentence most equitable. It seems to us far enough from improbable, that the conscience of the sinner will be at the last



his great and resistless accuser. In the most extreme cases of recklessness and hardihood, we have no right to speak of conscience as dead, but only as torpid. There is a state of suspended animation; but there is not a state of utter extinction. If you observe any thing of your own minds, you must know how singularly memory is often revived, so that words and occurrences which have been forgotten for years, will flash back upon you with all their first vividness. We are only stating a mental phenomenon, of which every one must have had some experience. It must I think have happened to all to observe, how some trifling incident, or some casual expression dropped in conversation, has awakened a train of recollections, so that things of which the remembrance seemed utterly to have perished, have crowded forward from the mind's chambers, and we have passed again through long forgotten scenes. It would seem as though a vast monitor slept in the cells of memory, however it may appear altogether obliterated; and that even a word or look may often have power to enter these cells, and awaken the slumbering images. And with this awakening of memory, there will be frequently an awakening of conscience; so that while actions, banished from the remembrance, force themselves again into notice, the monitor which God has placed in the breast, and clothed with power as his own vicegerent, will make a representation of the violence done to himself when the things thus suddenly remembered were committed. There would seem to be clear proof from experience, that conscience, as well as memory, may be thus resuscitated: for often a bold rebuke, or any mark of reprobation which is set upon him by the mass of his fellows, produces a sense of agony in the most hardened and abandoned; and thus, though he might overcome and put down the emotion, he is a witness to the residence of a principle in him, which may be paralyzed, and which may be deadened, but which cannot be extinguished by a long course of resistance. And if we can prove that memory and conscience may be both awakened, what an overwhelming thought is it that God may hereafter turn upon the sinner a resuscitating power, and so cause memory to reproduce every action, and conscience at the same time to determine its character. We can imagine no more formidable volume, than this of memory unfolding page after page of most accurate register, and thus presenting countless misdoings which have passed from the recollection of the perpetrator himself. And if conscience also be revived, so that it have all that power of remonstrance and reproach which belongs to it, till seared and wearied out, why there will be little need of any other accuser and judge: for as memory revives the forgotten offences, conscience will charge home their guilt on the offender.

We may not be warranted in advancing this as an explanation of what is told us respecting the books out of which we shall be judged; but we may maintain that if, at any time, even during our present existence, God were to revive memory, and re-endow conscience with supremacy, there would be acted in the individual case, something of that dread process of trial which is hereafter to embrace the whole of human kind. We can now see, that it is enough for memory to pour forth a train of forgotten occurrences, and conscience to pronounce upon each its authoritative decisions; and the stoutest transgressors would be shaken, and own, at least for a moment, they have deserved, and must expect, the wrath of their Creator. And if we suppose this revival of memory and conscience carried to the highest possible point, and taking place simult-

taneously in the myriads of the disobedient, as they gather to judgment, why we believe this will agree with what there is delineated by the opening of the book, and the calling of witnesses; so that throughout the hosts of the rebellious there will be the reading of their own guiltiness, and the pronouncing of their own condemnation.

Now there is much in our text to suggest and corroborate all our foregoing remarks. Addressing himself to the Jews, who, notwithstanding the clear testimony of his miracles, refused to admit his pretensions to the Messiahship, Christ declared, he would not himself be their accuser to the Father, but that there was one who would accuse them, even Moses, in whom they trusted. He thus brings into reference the final judgment, that kind of imagery of which we have spoken, and represents witnesses as coming forward to accuse. There would be no necessity (he states) that his own evidence should be given, in order that the Jews might be convicted of infidelity: there were so clear attestations to his mission in the writings of Moses—writings received by the nation as inspired, and professedly revered as containing God's law—that all who would not acknowledge him as Christ, pronounced clearly their own condemnation. So that Moses, while he is exhibited as the future accuser of the unbelieving Jews, would in some sense come forward at the judgment, and deliver the testimony by which their infidelity would be proved inexcusable. This testimony was in fact already being delivered, though we can conceive that the whole utterance could belong only to the future. And if you observe, that the accuser will be the lawgiver in whom they trusted, you will perceive that the representation is in harmony with our supposition of the opening of the books of memory and conscience. The Jews trusted in Moses; and yet, as Christ declared, did not really believe his writings: hence they depended on external privileges, though all the while their conduct proves they knew nothing of what was demanded of them as the people of God. There must have been great forgetfulness of the elements of their religion, and a great stifling of the pleadings of conscience, ere they could have brought themselves to have trusted in a lawgiver whose laws they set at nought. Let, then, memory be awakened, so that neglected precept and disregrated prophecy shall force themselves into remembrance, and let conscience be reinstated in its dominion, so that, as the precept and the prophecy come back, there shall be a reproachful witness how they have been despised and overlooked, and nothing more can be needed to the making these Jews confess their own worthlessness. Thus memory and conscience are revived to give sentence; and yet the figurative delineation may be that of our text, that Moses would accuse the Jews to the Father.

But we waive further reference to the last judgment, and proceed to the truth which the verses before us expressly set forth. We will examine, in the first place, into the somewhat strange assertion, that the believing Moses would be necessarily followed by the believing Christ. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me." In the second place, we will inquire into the force of the reasoning, that if the writings of Moses were not believed, neither would the words of Christ be believed: "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

I think there never can be a stronger witness to the intimate connexion between the Law and the Gospel, than that which is here given by the Redeemer himself. He makes it, you observe, a necessary consequence on men's believing Moses, that they should believe in himself as the long-promised Messiah. The Law and the Gospel must therefore be closely associated, as parts of the same system; or, the one must be the other more fully developed; else it could not necessarily hold good, that the two must be believed or disbelieved together. May I not take into my hand the five books of Moses, and thoroughly satisfy myself that God speaks by their author, and thus believe whatsoever these announce, and yet when I turn to the records of Christianity, fail to assure myself that *they* are equally divine? It is evident that Christ will not admit the possibility of such a case; he denies that Moses may be believed, and he himself disbelieved. And we think it worth your best attention, that the legal and Christian dispensations do each bear witness to the other; that their intimate connexion demonstrates the divine origin of both. This is the fact to which, as we suppose, the Saviour refers; and which, if rightly surveyed, is inexhaustible in evidence. If you consider the law as a system of types, and compare it with the Gospel as the antetype, it seems impossible to avoid being struck with the correspondence between the two. We are not now assuming the divinity of the Law, or the divinity of the Gospel: we merely take up the two documents, anxious to ascertain whether or no they bear reference to each other: and we are sure that any unprejudiced mind will confess, that they correspond with a wonderful precision. Amongst the many and singular figures of the Law, there is not one which does not find something answering to it, and explanatory of it, in the Gospel. The Gospel, in short, furnishes us with the character in which the Law is written, and thus, enables us to decipher the hieroglyphics: or, to vary our illustration, the law is as a curious and complicated piece of mechanism, with a thousand parts of which we can discover no use; but when you bring the Law into contact with the Gospel, all these thousand parts of the one fit in, as it were, into corresponding parts of the other: and we have before us a complete and magnificent construction. And we want to know how it could come to pass, that there should be this surprising agreement, how the one writing should explain the hieroglyphics of the other; or the two pieces of mechanism combined into one grand and symmetrical system? It must overpass the credulity of scepticism to believe, that the agreement is merely a chance, and that no Intelligent Cause wrought out the correspondence. If there were only here and there a point of resemblance—if, that is, the Gospel answered to the Law in none but a few solitary particulars, there might be something plausible in the idea, that the likeness was accidental; and we might not be compelled to recognise design. But when the correspondence may be traced in the minutest particulars—when it is the business of a life time to find out all the reciprocities, and the impossibility of a life-time to detect one disagreement, we are forced, if we would not do violence to common sense, to suppose an intentional similitude, and to believe that whoever constructed the Gospel, formed it for the purpose of adapting it to the Law.

Let us see, then, how this argument stands. We have assumed nothing as to the divine origin, either of the Law or the Gospel: we simply insist upon this incontrovertible fact, that the Law and the Gospel answer to each other with a



most surprising and unvarying accuracy; so that they wear an appearance, which cannot be accidental, of having been formed for mutual illustration. It is this connexion between the two on which we fasten, and of which we seek some account. Those who founded the Christian dispensation, must, if impostors, have laboured to give plausibility to their system by assimilating it to the legal: but in order to success, they must have possessed a most thorough acquaintance with every type and every figure of the Mosaic institution, and a most unbounded skill in giving substance to shadows: and of all the miracles which are proposed to our belief, this would, we think, be most difficult of admission. Treat Christianity as a cunningly-devised fable, and the great mystery is, how comes it to correspond so wondrously with the law. Even had the Apostles been the most learned Rabbis, we cannot believe that they would have attached a definite idea to every jot and tittle of the mysterious and burdensome ceremonies; or that if they had the idea, they would have been able to embody it into a new simple system. But when, in place of being the most learned Rabbis, it is matter of historical fact, that the Apostles were taken out of the lowest of the population, the difficulty of supposing Christianity to be of human invention increases so immeasurably, that we know not how a reflecting mind can give it one moment's entertainment. We should like, for example, to see, a company of acute and scientific reasoners, but ignorant of Christianity, sit down to the study of the books of Leviticus and Exodus: they shall be told, "These books are full of types and emblems, and figures, and ceremonies, and you must strive to devise a simple religious system, which shall give significance to every item of this symbolic array: there are mysterious intimations," we will tell them, "in every page, couched in parabolic language, or under sacrificial institutions, and your endeavour must be to invent a scheme of theology which shall afford a plausible and rational explanation of all that is thus obscure." Now do you honestly think, that our company of ingenious and intelligent writers would make much way with their task? Can you believe that, as the result of their joint labours, there would be sent into the world any scheme of religion which should fix the plain meaning, or, at least, afford a clue to all the mysteries of the books of Exodus and Leviticus?

Yet this is precisely what is done by the system of Christianity; done with so unvarying a carefulness, that you cannot find a point to which there is nothing corresponding. The men, moreover, who effected this, were ignorant and illiterate, so that the books were compiled when there was none of those human appliances, which at best would but ensure the most limited success. What alternative, then, have we, but that of admitting a supernatural interference, and ascribing to God the whole system of Christianity? For our own part, we ask no clearer evidence of the truth of Christianity, than that derived from the correspondence between the Law and the Gospel. There is something so palpably hopeless in the attempt of constructing a religion, which shall be explanatory of all that is mysterious, illustrative of all that is obscure, expository of all that is figurative, in the Mosaic dispensation, that when I find such a religion proposed to my acceptance, there seems no option but that I hail it as divine. Neither is it necessary that I have a firm assurance that the Law is divine. It may facilitate my conclusion as to the divinity of the Gospel, that I bring such an assurance with me to the inquiry; but it is not indispensable.



I may have my doubts of both the Law and the Gospel; but when I observe how, to use our former expression, the two fit into each other, and how far this mutual adaptation overpasses all human sagacity, there is no resisting the conviction that the Gospel is from God: and then, forasmuch as the Gospel recognises the Law as divine, there is no resisting the inference, that the Law also is from God.

And thus, as we think, the argument employed by Christ in our text, is both stated and vindicated. We have, indeed, somewhat exceeded the limits of his argument; but we have included whatever is needful for its illustration. That Moses should be believed, and he himself disbelieved—this is what Christ denounces as impossible; and we prove the impossibility by shewing the superhuman skill in the precise adaptation of Christianity to Judaism. This adaptation, the wondrous fitting of one system into the other, shews (for this is a fair, though different view of the matter) that the two systems proceed from the same Author. The artist who made the first complicated machine, must have made the second which unites with it so wonderfully, and thus forms a perfect symmetry. And if these Jews really believed the Law to be from God, they must have entertained a like belief with regard to the Gospel; they could not overlook the agreement of the two. This agreement sufficiently demonstrated the sameness of authorship; and when, therefore, they rejected Christ, the necessary inference was, that they did not in reality believe Moses, however they might in profession: and the Redeemer might address them in the language before us, “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”

We have yet, however, to allow, that there was something remarkable in the employment of this language; seeing that the system of Christianity was as yet, but imperfectly announced. It is easy for ourselves to trace the wonderful correspondence between the two dispensations, and to argue against the wilfulness of infidelity which is proof against the evidence thus furnished of both. But the Jews, when addressed by Jesus, were in a different position; they had not the same acquaintance with the yet unfinished redemption; and their power was therefore less of comparing Moses and Christ. It is certain, however, that Christ, in the early stages of his ministry, had given sufficient proof that he was “the prophet” whom Moses foretold: and the proof had already overcome the unbelief of the Samaritans. The Samaritans, you know, rejected all the Old Testament, except the five books of Moses: hence their Scriptural evidence, that Jesus was the Messiah, must have been derived exclusively from Moses. Yet in the chapter preceding that from which our text is taken, we find many of the Samaritans declaring, “We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” So that before Jesus died and before the system of Christianity was fully revealed, there must have been proof, in his miracles and conversations, to all who believed Moses, that he was the long promised Deliverer.

It would not, indeed, consist with the plan of our discourse, that we examine into the testimony given by Moses to Christ: but this reference to the case of the Samaritans is sufficient, because it peculiarly demonstrates that they who only believed Moses, and had only Moses, had evidence within reach that Jesus was the Messiah, and that consequently, there was full justice in the accusation,

that the Jews disbelieved Moses, seeing that they disbelieved Christ. It is far more for our profit, that we take the argument in its greatest extent; and we would, therefore, commend it again to your earnest attention. The argument is, that the correspondences between the Law and the Gospel, are so numerous and so accurate, that no one could have forged the Gospel, because no one, whatever his acquaintance with the types of the Law, could have invented an exact system of antetypes. We are sure, the more you ponder this statement, the more convincing will it seem to you. You have only to propose this question to yourselves, when asking proof of the divine origin of the Gospel: Is it supposable, that men with the Old Testament in their hands, could have forged a New, which should answer alike in every particular to that of the Old? For it is undeniable that the New explains all the types of the Old, and fulfils its main prophecies. Was not this impossible, whether by an enthusiast or an impostor? Who can believe, that the Old Testament—long imperfectly understood, because full of what seemed inexplicable enigma—should be suddenly interpreted, its figures turned into realities, its shadows into substances, its predictions into occurrences, and all by the skill of a few illiterate fishermen? This is an opinion whose reception lays a greater demand on faith, than any or all the miracles which Christianity admits. Be the Old Testament true or false, more than human skill was displayed in so forming the New, that it should correspond in the minutest particulars with the Old—solve its difficulties, satisfy its promises, perfect its sacrifices, and accomplish its visions: but, of course, so far as we ascertain the New Testament divine, we have witness in its pages that the Old Testament is divine: and thus, with no material of proof but what is furnished by the connexion between the Testaments, we may reach the conclusion, that the whole Bible is divine. It is then true of the men of every generation, that if they believe not the writings of Moses, neither can they believe the words of Christ.

The Bible, though its several parts were composed in different ages, and therefore by different writers, is an uniform book, presenting throughout the same truths, though with great variety of exhibition, and marked throughout by a surprising similarity of style. What does this prove, but that the Bible throughout must have had the same Author, however that Author may have employed various scribes? It is, we think, one of the most beautiful of contemplations, this of the sameness of authorship, which may be traced in Holy Writ: that men, separated from each other by long intervals of time, should have taken up successively the lofty topic of our redemption, and, whether in the effusions of poetry, or the enactments of legislation, or the anticipations of prophecy, or the narrations of history, should have told the same truths, and announced the same measures; and this, too, in a manner so peculiarly their own, that you cannot meet with a page of their writings from the book of Genesis downward to Revelations; and not instantly recognise it as a page of the Bible. We say of this, it can be accounted for on no supposition, but that of each having been moved by the same Divine Spirit; so that to deny the inspiration of Scripture is to make its compositions more marvellous than when considered superhuman. In reading the Bible, I seem always to hear the same voice: whether the volume is informing me how the unshapen chaos resolved itself at the Creator's bidding into symmetry and life—or men, who, familiar with the

scenes, are gathering centuries into sentences; or the lawgiver is arranging the ceremonies of the mystic volume, or historians are discoursing of battles and captivities, or Evangelists describing the institutions, and Apostles unfolding the doctrines of Christianity—I seem always to hear the same voice, as though the words of John, the exile in Patmos, were the echo of those of Moses the leader of Israel. There is vast difference in the subjects successively touched on, but notwithstanding there is a tone, which I always recognise, and which always impresses the feeling that I am hearkening to the same speaker. There seems no change in the instrument, though continual change in the sound; as if at one time the whirlwind swept the chords, that I may be astonished with the utterance of wrath and devastation, and at another, they were touched by an angel's hand, that I might be soothed by the melody of mercy. And while the same voice is breathed from every page of Scripture, it never issues from any other composition. The commentator cannot speak in the same tone as the prophet or the evangelist. What poet can forge a psalm that shall pass for David's? What preacher can construct a sermon that might be received as delivered by Peter or Paul? Look at the Apocrypha; you perceive directly the Scripture style imitated, but that there is *only* imitation. We defy a man to write like the writers in the Bible; and yet all the writers in the Bible write alike. We say they write alike: their styles are very different; you have the gorgeous and the simple, the didactic and the argumentative; but still they write alike. Whenever you hear a Scriptural quotation, you know it to be Scriptural, though you are not acquainted with the passage. We again affirm there is an evidence in it which ought to be irresistible, in that sameness of authorship, which alone will account for what we observe in the Bible. You have no possible explanation, if you reject the inspiration of Scripture, of the fact to which we have referred—the fact that the same truths are delivered in the figures and predictions of the Old Testament, and the realities and occurrences of the New. There is the same scheme carried on by the wanderings of patriarchs, the sacrifices of priests, the ambition of kings, and the sufferings of martyrs. The same style is preserved by the poet in his hymns, by the prophet in his visions, the lawgiver in his codes, the historian in his annals; so that as though the Author never died, but appeared at one time in one character, and another in another, the Bible comes to me as the dictate of one mind, and the writing of one pen. Inspiration only accounts for this; but we cannot imagine any other solution. And if (for it is on this our text bids us fasten) if there be such a sameness between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, that all the types in the one, find exact antetypes in the other, and thus the two have such a relationship, that they compose one uniform system; we must receive both or reject both. If we believe Moses we must believe Christ, and if we believe Christ we must believe Moses: and this serves to vindicate what might otherwise seem difficult, that no Jew can truly believe his own religion, and yet deny the Christian religion: “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”

But we have now, lastly, and very briefly, to inquire into THE FORCE OF THE REASONING, THAT IF THE WRITINGS OF MOSES WERE NOT BELIEVED, NEITHER WOULD THE WORDS OF CHRIST BE: “For if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”



Now we are wont to attach great worth to the privilege that those enjoyed, who were with Christ when on earth, and heard from his own lips the tidings of salvation : we imagine to ourselves the extraordinary power with which the message would come home to the conscience and the heart, if in place of being delivered by one of our brethren, Christ himself should announce it, and discourse on the great things of atonement and intercession. We cannot think that there would be an inattentive listener in the most crowded assembly, if the Saviour were to re-appear as the minister of the sanctuary, and bid the weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest ; and we might be inclined to suppose, that the amount of real conversions would be greatly increased, and that, as men departed from the scene of ministration, they would, for the most part, carry away the words in their heart, and not, as is now too generally the case, leave equally behind them, the church and the sermon. But there seems every likelihood that these opinions are erroneous. There would unquestionably be a greater increase of attention, and men would hearken with more excited and elevated feelings, if the Redeemer were visible amongst us, filling the office of teacher of the nations. We can be quite persuaded that there would be banished from our religious assemblies, every appearance of listlessness and languor, and that as the rich and expressive oratory was poured forth, which compelled even his enemies to exclaim, "Never man spake like this man," there would be a spell over the entranced and enraptured audience, and, it might be, a high feeling of devotion towards the celestial speaker, with somewhat of a rising determination, that he should not plead in vain for God and truth. But it is evident from the passage now under review, that we should not be warranted in expecting deeper and more permanent results? If the fact, that the Jews had resisted the writings of Moses, proved that there was no hope of him being overcome by the words of Christ, we might infer, that those who withstand the preaching of Christ's ministers would withstand the preaching of Christ himself ; that the infidelity which was proof against the Scriptures of the Old Testament, might be expected (thus he argues) to resist the discourses of Messiah : "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" And assuredly, if the amount of resistance, which would suffice for the rejecting Christ's words, was not greater than that displayed in rejecting the writings of Moses, it must be a vain idea, that those who disbelieve Christianity, as it is now published to the world, would yield themselves to his disciples, if they had heard it pronounced by the Founder himself. We cannot doubt that he who has the whole Bible in his hands, the New Testament as well as the Old, has more to overcome ere he can be an infidel, than he who had only the writings of Moses. The Bible is evidently a progressive book, and as its contents have grown, so also has the demonstration of its divinity. If then we refuse the Scriptures, we manifest greater obduracy than the Jews, who resisted only a portion of the Scriptures ; and hence if it followed from their not believing the writings of Moses, that the Jews could not believe the words of Christ, it must yet more necessarily follow, that if we are not convinced by the study of the Bible, neither should we be by the preaching of Jesus.

Now this conclusion, to which our text unavoidably leads, deserves, on every account, your attentive consideration. There was no likelihood, you observe, that the Jews would believe the words of Christ. But why not? Because they



disbelieved the writings of Moses. This was, in fact, saying that that infidelity which was too staunch for the writings of Moses, must also be too staunch for the words of Christ; but *we* have more in our possession than the writings of Moses—we have the whole canon of Scripture; and to disbelieve this argues for stauncher infidelity than to disbelieve the Pentateuch; so that there would be less likelihood than in the case of the Jews, that those of us on whom the Bible makes no practical impression, would be converted to righteousness if privileged to hear the Gospel from the Redeemer himself. And why is this? Can it be denied, that if I were to see Christ work miracles, and to hearken to him explaining, with divine eloquence, the mysteries of redemption, there would be brought to bear on me a more powerful instrument than is put forth by the written word, whatever its internal and external evidence? We reply, at once, there would be a greater appeal to the senses, and a strong excitement of the feelings, but there is no reason to suppose that the heart would be necessarily more affected. The main thing to be observed is, that whatever the instrument employed, the result of conversion is brought round by the Holy Ghost. It is not the instrument which converts, but the Divine Agent who makes use of that instrument. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God who giveth the increase. If I saw a miracle, or if I heard Christ preach, and became, in consequence, a believer, it would not be the miracle or the preaching that converted me; it would be the Holy Ghost employing the miracle or the preaching as his engine, and therewith assaulting the strong hold of unbelief. In like manner, if I am converted in studying the written word, it is not a certain chapter or a certain verse which effects the moral change, it is that celestial Agent who indited the word, and who now applies it with power to the work of renovation. We are sure that there is no respect of persons with God, and that consequently, one generation is dealt with by the same laws as another. We must believe, that whether it be by the miracle or the Scripture that the Holy Spirit operates, the amount of influence is the same; so that he who could resist in the one case, would equally resist in the other.

We wish you to be clear in this, for we think it a matter of the first-rate importance. One man is converted by seeing a miracle, another by reading a chapter; the Holy Spirit is in both instances the converting agent, working in the first case by the miracle, in the second by the chapter; but we have no right to think, that in handling the miracle, the Spirit applied a greater effort than in handling the chapter. The miracle in itself seems a mightier engine than the chapter; but the arm which is to wield the engine, so to speak, may so adjust the strength which it puts forth on different occasions, that the blow struck by the chapter shall be of precisely the same weight as the blow struck by the miracle. It is on this principle that we account for the argument employed by Christ in the text. The Jews had heretofore been attacked by the writings of Moses; now they were attacked by the words of Jesus. They had withstood the first attack, that of the writing, and therefore (thus Christ reasons) there was little or no hope of their being overcome by the second attack, that of the word. Why not? Were not the words more powerful than the writing? Doubtless they were; on all human calculation the words would be successful when the writings were ineffective. Now observe; in resisting the writings of Moses, the Jews had resisted the Holy Spirit speaking in those writings;

henceforward, in resisting the words of Jesus, they were to resist the Holy Spirit speaking in those words. But the Spirit, acting through the instrumentality of the writings of Moses, might apply as much influence, as when acting through the influence of the words of Jesus. The words in themselves might be more powerful than the writings; but as wielded by the Spirit, the two might be of precisely the same force: and we believe that what might be, actually was. The Spirit does enough to produce conviction, whatever the instrument employed; he does not so much as to force conviction, for this would not consist with the accountableness of man. Hence he made the writings of Moses powerful enough to produce conviction; and this is all that he does with the words of Christ. So that there was just as much to overcome in disbelieving the writings as there would be in disbelieving the words; for the Spirit working by the writings, attacked with the same energy as when working by the words; and therefore the question is emphatic and conclusive, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

The case is just the same with ourselves. A miracle seems a more convincing thing than a page of Scripture: then are we not likely to be converted by the one, though we remain unconverted by the other? Why, we again say, it is not the miracle which can convert, neither is it the page of Scripture, but simply the Holy Spirit employing either the miracle or the page. The Spirit is now pleased to operate by the written word; whereas, in earlier days he operated by wonders and signs: but, being assured that he does as much for one generation as for another, acting sufficiently, but not more than sufficiently, for each, we are also assured that the written word, which is the present engine, is practically of the same power as the miracle, which was the former engine. Resist, then, the written word, and you resist precisely that amount of spiritual influence which would be brought to bear upon you by the miracle. You are attacked in a different form, but not by a different force: so that if you disbelieve with the Bible in your hands, you have no right to think you would believe were Christ preaching in our streets. The Spirit turns on us just that amount of evidence which may enable us, but not compel us, to seek salvation through Jesus; and this was the very amount which he turned upon the Jews: less would not have left them inexcusable, and more would have interfered with their moral accountableness. And thus we have virtually the same advantage as the Jews; we have the same divine influence, though it acts through a different instrumentality.

We should not then be benefited by living in an age of miracles; there would be more of excitement, and more of sensible appeal, but we have no right to think that there would be one jot more of conversion. Conversion is the effect of the Spirit's operations; and if the Spirit's operations are the same in power, now that the written word is the engine, as they were when acting through the superhuman preaching, it must be admitted on all hands, that if we believe not the writings, neither should we believe the words. To think that, although we are unconverted by Scripture, yet we should be converted by miracle, is to charge the Spirit of doing more for one age of Christianity than another; in other words, it is to apologize for infidelity, by throwing the blame of it upon God. The mind, indeed, attaches naturally great worth to sensible evidence, and we can hardly be persuaded that it would not be overpowering; but is it

not said in the parable, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead?" Supposing I could not satisfy myself on the authority of Scripture, that there is a future state of punishment, should I necessarily remain unconvinced, even though in the deep stillness of the midnight, there stood by my bedside, the friend whom I had buried, telling me of the realities of another existence? Because I resisted the testimony of the book, is it certain that I should resist the testimony of this mysterious visitant, coming in his awfulness and unearthliness, to preach a truth which I had heretofore denied? Such is the assertion of the parable, and we see no reason to question its accuracy. I might for a time be scared, and almost stupified, by what I saw and heard; but when I came to examine the amount of evidence, should I find it as great as that for the truth of the Bible? It were absurd to maintain this, that the evidence for Scripture is not stronger than that of an apparition. I may have been deceived; the whole might have been a dream, a phantom of an overwrought imagination; and if satisfied that I actually saw a form, and heard a voice, some evil spirit may have assumed the dead man's shape, in order to deceive me. The apparition might prove there was another world, with spiritual inhabitants, but it could not prove to me that there was a future state for myself. The question, you see, is simply one of evidence. The Bible testifies there is a future state, and the apparition testifies there is a future state; which have I most reason to believe? You will not deny—no rational inquirer can deny, that there is better evidence for the Bible, than there can be for the apparition. If then, I can resist the Bible, what ground have you to suppose I can be overcome by the apparition? I might indeed lose my senses through fear, but this would only make me question afterwards my competency to judge: when I had recovered my composure, I should turn my doubts into evidence that the whole were delusion. Yea, indeed, if I can withstand Christ, who actually came from the dead, and his Apostles, who were witnesses of his resurrection, the form of my very kinsman might well address me in the words of the text, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

We have no space to add much in concluding this great subject of discourse. We recur for one instant to our introductory remarks, and bid you think of the last day, with its trials and witnesses. It is Moses, in whom they trusted, who will accuse the Jews; so that condemnation will be found where confidence is reposed; and unless it be the Judge himself in whom we trust, our source of hope will in like manner prove a swift witness against us. If we depend on outward privileges, on having been baptized with Christian baptism, and received into fellowship in the Christian Church, how will these privileges stand forward as accusers, when memory and conscience, are suddenly, thoroughly, and for ever awakened? If we depend on a righteousness of our own, hoping to gain acceptance with God by meritorious obedience, there will be no need that any book be opened but the book of our own remembered experience. The righteousness in which we trusted is constantly warning us, though we are deaf to its invitations, of its own worthlessness; and what shall it do but accuse us hereafter to the Father? But if it be Christ the Judge, as well as the Saviour of human kind, in whom we trust, who is he that shall accuse us? Memory and conscience shall be both in full vigour; and yet there shall be no

arraigning for sins, but conscience shall testify that they have all been transferred by faith to the Mediator, and that Mediator himself shall welcome us as the "blessed of the Father," and show our names graven in the Lamb's book of life. Oh that none of us may imitate the Jew, rejecting the only confidence that shall not turn to an accuser.



## THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS, THE SUPREME OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

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REV. T. FINCH.

DEVONSHIRE SQUARE CHAPEL, JUNE 16, 1834 \*.

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“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”—JAMES, v. 19, 20.

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IN every enterprise of Christian benevolence, there are three things indispensably requisite:—first, a distinct view of the object to be attained; secondly, means and resources equal to the design; and thirdly, motives sufficiently powerful to meet its labours and its difficulties. If we embark in a concern without either of these, the first difficulty will paralyze exertion, and a series of discouragements will induce us to abandon the work in despair. But when all these are happily combined, they will not only produce wise and vigorous efforts, but insure that steady perseverance, which, in a good cause, rarely, if ever, fails of ultimate success.

Had not the Apostles of Christ, in the commencement and prosecution of their ministry, been well-furnished with these requisite supports, their spirits would have failed them in the presence of the Sanhedrim; and shrinking from the dangers of a doubtful and hazardous undertaking, they would have sought for safety in retirement, and entombed Christianity in their own shame. But those men of God, from the day of Pentecost, fully understood the object of their commission; which was, not to effect some beneficial change in the laws and government of their country; not to make known some useful discovery in science and civilization, which might ameliorate the temporal condition of mankind; not to introduce some novel system of philosophy and morals, grateful to speculative minds; not to propose some additional object of worship, or to reform the rites and ceremonies of some dominant religion; but for a purpose infinitely more important—to reveal the character and counsels of the true God, and to restore an apostate world to his service and friendship for ever. They knew that however arduous the labour, or whatever difficulties might arise from the prevailing errors and corruptions of the age, or from the innate depravity of the human heart, their means and resources, not depending on human sanction, but on the grace and faithfulness of God, were perfectly adequate to the enterprise. The motives and considerations which induced their first efforts, lost nothing of their influence when the charm of novelty was gone, but rather gained strength from experience, and bore them on with unimpaired confidence

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and zeal, through evil report and through good report, through disappointment and success, to the termination of their course. Toward the close of life they felt assured the cause of Christ would not cease with their removal, but be carried on by a succession of faithful labourers, whom their divine Master would raise up for that purpose, till, like the morning light and the vital air, it would expand and diffuse itself over all the world. Having themselves felt those purer motives which the Gospel inspires, they wished others likewise to feel them; and, therefore, the venerable Apostle James, writing to the brethren scattered abroad and beset with enemies and dangers, said for their encouragement, "Brethren, if any do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

In applying this subject to the present occasion, let us consider the propensity of mankind to err from the truth: the important change necessary to their salvation: the means and agency by which that change may be effected: and the motives which should induce and sustain the attempt. And as this is the commencement of a series of public solemnities interesting to the Church at large, and to our own Denomination in particular, may the Holy Spirit enable the speaker to give a suitable direction to your thoughts and feelings, and render this week a Pentecostal season to ourselves and to the churches.

**I. THE PROPENSITY OF MANKIND TO ERR FROM THE TRUTH** so obviously assumed in the text.

The facts and doctrines of pure Christianity, contained in the holy Scriptures, are emphatically called *the truth*; the most important of all truth, the truth of God, the verities of providence and grace, in which the God of Truth has revealed the realities of faith, and confirmed them by the broad seal of his authority. It is the happiness of the true Christian, when taught of God, to know the truth in all its essential particulars; and while he holds fast the form of sound words, while he clings to the pillar and ground of the truth, the truth makes him free from error, prejudice, the world, and sin; becomes the foundation of his hopes, and the source of his purest happiness; a preservative from evil, and his chief incentive to all good. But the rest of mankind are either ignorant of the truth, or strangers to its saving influence; carried away by a roving imagination, or devoted to pernicious errors. When, therefore, the Apostle says, "If any do err from the truth," he does not suppose a few solitary cases, rare exceptions to the general state of men, but rather refers to the prevailing condition of our species. For, if the word of God be the only test of truth, the only standard of moral rectitude; if every thing repugnant to its principles be error, and every deviation from its precepts be sin; then the generality of mankind in every age and clime have lamentably erred, and still err from the truth. So that referring to the true Church of Christ, which in its utmost enlargement, still embraces only a minority, a small minority of our race, we may truly say in the language of the beloved Apostle, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Some do err from the truth, as the text implies, after being taught it by their parents and ministers; after knowing something of its beauty and excellence; after enrolling their names among its friends, and giving some hopeful proofs

of its vital and transforming power. Gradually seduced and overcome by temptations, by sinful propensities, by the cares or fascinations of the world, by evil companionships, or by habits of speculation and scepticism, they become at first perhaps indifferent to the truth, then reject one point after another, and then at last abandon all its claims, retire from its friends, and join the ranks of its enemies; or launching at once upon the broad stream of infidelity and sin, "they make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows."

Others do err from the truth through habitual inattention to its claims, or a secret aversion to its spirit and authority, felt in youth and confirmed afterwards by indulgence in sin, and the corrupting associations of the world. Though brought up in a Christian land; though surrounded by ministers of distinguished integrity and wisdom; though within reach of books which exhibit the truth in the most lucid and convincing form; and with all the light and beauty of truth so widely diffused around them: yet, how many thousands and tens of thousands are there, who never made it the subject of serious thought; who never tried to understand its facts and its evidences; in whose minds there is a total vacancy of religious sentiment—so that if they are not notorious as the abettors of error, they are profoundly ignorant of the truth, and living without God in the world. And then with respect to vast multitudes besides, having in early life pursued a course of dissipation and sin, and become the victims of some inordinate passion, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life," they dislike the truth which condemns their vices, and turn a deaf ear to its voice; while vicious habits render them still more averse to its spirit and authority. Thus deeply prejudiced against the truth, they resign themselves to a deep and incurable fatuity, or eagerly embrace some pernicious error which flatters their depravity, and lulls conscience to repose, "choosing darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

But more still err from the truth, through a total destitution of the means of knowledge, and the influence of some system of error and delusion, instilled into the mind in youth, and identified with all their interests and associations. This is the case with countless numbers of our fellow-men in those immense and populous regions, which are overspread with the Mahomedan imposture, with the idolatrous institutions of Brahma and Bhudhu, and the still grosser superstitions of more savage tribes. Placed beyond the reach of the Christian ministry, and other vehicles of truth, they have grown to manhood and sunk down to the grave, myriads after myriads, in total ignorance of God, the victims of barbarous delusions, of gloomy and demoralizing superstitions. Like travellers in a dense fog, or a deep and impenetrable forest, they see not the realities of faith or the visible glories of Deity, but, by the feeble lights which glimmer around them, and make the darkness more palpable, they form the most vague and deceptive images of things, and grope their way in extreme uncertainty and danger.

Nor is this the case only where pagan idolatry has reigned for ages, or Mahomedanism established its iron sway, but to a large extent also in many parts of Christendom, where pernicious errors are instilled into the public mind by the ministers of religion, and the light of truth is obscured, if not extinguished, by the thick darkness of popery. For though the Church of Rome professedly

maintains the essentials of Christian truth, those truths are so entirely thrown into the shade by her ministers, or mingled with such a mass of corruption in doctrine and discipline, as to divest them of their beauty, to neutralize their power, to pervert or conceal their import, and to render them of no effect. So many and so pernicious are her delusions in the sphere of operation chosen by the Society which has convened us together this evening, that we may truly say, thousands and tens of thousands there are perishing for lack of knowledge, seduced from the truth as it is in Jesus, and devoted to the most egregious and fatal errors.

It is not for us to assume the province of the supreme Judge, by assigning to every kind of error its share of criminality, or by saying how much or how little must of necessity exclude its victims from the kingdom of heaven. But we may safely affirm, that all ignorance of God, all errors in regard to our spiritual interests, from the most revolting atheism to the first misconceptions of truth, must be deemed an intrinsic unmitigated evil, in all cases a calamity, and in most a crime. And even in those cases where error is the result of a lamentable privation, a kind of hereditary disease, or indigenous malady, as helpless as the physical peculiarities of the country, it is at the same time a tremendous curse, comprising within itself the elements of moral and spiritual ruin, the essence and combination of all evil. While the truth, known and believed, and brought home with divine power to the heart, is the source of spiritual life to the soul, producing all the symptoms of moral vitality, and conducting to life eternal; error, on the contrary, is the principle of spiritual death, which, spreading its deleterious influence, impairs all the sensibilities and functions of the soul, suspends its intercourse with the fountain of light and life, and by a fatal process, degrades its powers, and prepares it for death eternal.

II. THE IMPORTANT CHANGE NECESSARY TO SALVATION; the conversion of a sinner from the error of his way.

Some individuals in the course of life, undergo many changes, civil and religious, important to themselves and to their connexions. In a state so imperfect as the present, with views of things so partial, in circumstances so perplexing, and with motives of so mixed a character, good men, in pushing their inquiries after truth, will sometimes see, or think they see, reason to change their sentiments, and to pass over from one creed and one denomination to another. And as honest men of all persuasions, believe their own views approach the nearest to pure Christianity, and, therefore, wish them to prevail; such changes will be deplored by one party as lamentable defections from the truth, and hailed by the other as the triumph of right principles. But this is not the conversion we are anxious to effect. Such changes may happen to good men without moral injury, and to bad men without spiritual benefit. But the conversion of a sinner from the error of his way, is a change more deep and entire, affecting the elements of his spiritual constitution and character, and the very condition of his moral being. It is a change from ignorance of divine things, to spiritual discernment; from serious errors, to the reception of saving truth; from unbelief, to a cordial faith in the Son of God; from feelings and habits of impiety, to the love and adoration of his Maker; from a course of vanity and



sins, to a life of integrity and virtue ; from the mere morality of worldly prudence, to all the graces of Christian piety ; and from the inordinate cares and pursuits of time, to a sincere and immediate preparation for eternity.

When the sinner is awakened to reflection, and the light of divine truth is poured upon his mind, his thoughts begin to flow in a new current ; the objects he has been accustomed to think of, assume a different complexion ; the realities of faith present themselves in all their interest and grandeur ; he perceives and abandons the errors of his former thoughts ; and resigns his mind to the clear and overwhelming evidence of the truth as it is in Jesus. When the judgment is enlightened, and conscience is aroused to the due exercise of its functions, the dispositions of the heart are changed ; the will bows to the authority of heaven ; the dominant passions of sensuality, pride, selfishness, avarice, and ambition, in all their corrupt tendencies, are subdued ; new desires and inclinations arise within him ; better feelings obtain the ascendancy, till the whole temper, motives, and faculties of the soul, partake of this blessed renovation. And when the heart within is changed, the life and conduct correspond ; a manifest improvement takes place in the conversation and character ; and the sinner is not only converted from the error of his way, but consecrates himself to God, and to the cultivation of every virtue which can adorn the individual or benefit the world. So complete and radical is the change, that, to use the language of inspiration, he becomes " a new creature in Christ Jesus : old things are passed away, and behold all things become new." Impelled by the purer motives of grace, he denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows the Saviour. Counting all things of no value in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, he is willing, if it be needful, to suffer the loss of all things, that he may win Christ, and be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

The production of this change was foretold by the prophets, as the distinguishing glory of the Christian dispensation, when God would give to his people a new heart and a right spirit, and their sins and their iniquities he would remember no more. Its necessity to make us truly Christians now, and to insure us a place in the kingdom of glory hereafter, was most solemnly urged by our Lord in many of his discourses, and by his inspired Apostles through the whole of their ministry ; while its reality and fruits were exemplified in the first Churches. Who, indeed, that reflects on the fallen condition of our nature, with all its errors and corruptions, in contrast with the spirituality of the Gospel, the holy character of God, and the purity of the heavenly world, can for a moment doubt the necessity of such a change to the salvation of sinners. While it is the glory of the Gospel to proclaim an economy of grace, by which the blessings of salvation are freely dispensed as unmerited favours, it is equally its glory to effect the moral renovation of its recipients. Though pardoned and justified freely through faith in the blood of the Lamb, we must, at the same time, be quickened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. So that, while salvation, from its commencement to its consummation, is not of works, lest any man should boast, we must nevertheless be " the workmanship of God, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

### III. THE MEANS AND AGENCY BY WHICH THIS CHANGE MAY BE EFFECTED: "If one convert him."

God might doubtless produce this change in a sinner by an immediate operation on the soul, without any sensible agency, or visible means whatever. He might stop the sinner in his course at any moment, and by a silent and irresistible working, constrain him to forsake the error of his way, and to become at once a decided and exemplary Christian. But the Apostle James supposes, in the text, that one is converted by the instrumentality of another, and that the use of fit means for that purpose, was the common concern of all who constituted the first Christian Churches. For, as in nature God effects all his purposes by second causes, and makes the elements of the physical system the means of all its changes and productions; so it has pleased him, in the moral and spiritual world, to effect his purposes of grace by the instrumentality of his servants. As the natural light, which now pervades all nature, animate and inanimate, when created at the beginning, was the mighty principle which first operated on the dark chaos of the world, and educed the order and beauty of this fair creation; and as the same light now flowing from the sun, the centre of its effulgence, every year renovates the beauty and fertility of the earth; so the light of divine truth, emanating from the Word of God, is the grand principle by which his Spirit still works on the dark and troubled mass of the moral world, and says, "Behold! I create all things new!" The Spirit of God enlightens and improves the human spirit by reasonable means; by intelligent and self-conscious means; by means suited to its powers and responsibilities; by means which do not suspend its freedom, but lead the mind, of its own choice, to a new and efficient use of its faculties.

Formed, as we are, with the same sympathies, and placed together in mutual dependence, we cannot live for ourselves alone, nor pass through life without a salutary or a pernicious influence. God has, in a manner, charged every man with his brother's keeping, and blended together our moral and eternal interests, as well as those which are physical and secular. As the votaries of error and sin diffuse the poison of evil, and thus become to others the instruments of moral and spiritual ruin, so it is the will of God that the friends of truth and righteousness should diffuse their healing influence, and become to others the instruments of spiritual life. Every mind in which the light of truth has been kindled, should become a lamp to enlighten others, that its rays may be diffused to the remotest confines of the globe. Every heart that feels the power of divine love, should communicate the impulse, that it may spread from soul to soul, from family to family, and from clime to clime, till, in its full expanse, it shall encircle the whole race of man. By making human agency the means of converting sinners, God enlists all the mental powers and social affections of our nature, on the side of truth and virtue, and secures the perpetuity and progress of his own cause by the most silent and efficient means; while he elevates our nature by the process, and confers upon us the honour of being co-workers with God.

To be the instruments of effecting the conversion of sinners on the largest scale, and till the end of time, was the chief purpose for which the Apostles received and executed their commission as the ambassadors of Christ. In the discharge of this work, they were eminently successful; and thousands and tens

of thousands through the civilized world and among barbarians, felt the transforming power of their doctrine, and became the channels of its transmission to others. Their successors in every age and clime, glowing with the same spirit, diffusing the same knowledge, and sanctioned by the same divine power, have "turned multitudes from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." And though the voice of the living preacher may seem less needful now, than when books were few and expensive, yet the faithful preaching of the cross is the grand instrument of converting souls to God, and will continue to be so till the end of time. To this work the Christian missionary and the Christian preacher must devote his best energies, that he may persuade sinners "to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel;" while, by demonstration of the truth, he commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, desiring both to save himself and them that hear him.

But let it not be thought that the charge of attempting the conversion of sinners, devolves alone on the ministers of Christ, whether at home, or in the remote field of missionary labour. No, brethren; it devolves upon the whole Christian Church in its collective capacity, and upon all its members in particular for if ministers are set for the defence of the Gospel, the Church is charged with the conservation of its purity, and the means of its universal dissemination and support. But how, it may be asked, can Christians, in the private walks of life, assist in this good work? Why, by embracing the truth yourselves, and becoming its enlightened and consistent friends; by proving its excellence in the purity and benevolence of your walk; by observing those institutions which embody and perpetuate the truth; by supporting the Christian ministry in your several Churches; by giving your approbation, your patronage, your time, your pecuniary contributions, your prayers, to the cause of missions and other kindred institutions; and by actually teaching the ignorant, and attempting the conversion of sinners, in your own spheres. Christian parents, heads of families, instructors of youth, teachers and superintendents of sabbath schools, keep in view the saving conversion and lasting piety of your charge, as the chief and ultimate object of your labours. Distributors of Christian tracts, supporters of the Bible Society in all its branches, preachers of the Gospel at home, and Christian missionaries abroad, in opposing ignorance and error, and promulgating the truth as it is in Jesus, let the conversion of souls to God, and their habitual meetness for death and glory, be the grand point to which your hallowed services are devoted. And while we call upon Christians of every rank, according to their resources, to assist those who labour in the field, with your pecuniary contributions; let every mite be given with an immediate view to this great purpose, and be accompanied with fervent and believing prayer, "that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."

**IV. THE MOTIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD INDUCE AND SUSTAIN THE ATTEMPT,** as implied or suggested by the words before us.

But before we proceed, let me pause a moment, and entreat you to ask yourselves, whether you have been the subjects of this saving change, and are in a fit state to attempt the conversion of others? If I am speaking to any who have hitherto resisted the calls of truth, or have not forsaken the error of their ways,

how can *you* desire the salvation of others, and how preposterous to attempt it? If *you* are hastening the downward road to perdition, how can *you* arrest others in the same course, or assist in saving them from destruction? By persisting in unbelief and sin, and exposing yourselves to the utmost peril, you not only unfit yourselves for this noble and generous labour, but in all probability hinder the conversion of others, and become accessory to their final condemnation—and thus aggravate the mass of your own guilt, and embitter the elements of your future misery. I beseech you, therefore, by the mercy of God, by the sufferings and humiliation of the Saviour, by the solemn whispers of his Spirit, by the calls and promises of the Gospel, by everything most sacred in time and eternity—I beseech you *now* to repent and turn to God, that having yourselves obtained mercy, you may direct others to the same refuge! But, assured that I am speaking to the true disciples of the Son of God, who have known and enjoyed the consolations of the Gospel, and therefore desire that all others may enjoy them, allow me to suggest those considerations which should prompt you to this course, and sustain your minds under all its labours and discouragements. For, “if any do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

1. *Consider the magnitude of its immediate results:* “He shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” Whatever consequences of temporal interest may result from mere changes of opinion or of party—from reverses of fortune, or revolutions in the state—deeply as these may affect us at the time, and absorbing as we may feel them to be, they are all trivial and fading, compared with those which result from the soul’s conversion to God, which are infinite and eternal. For what is meant by the death of the soul, that second death, which is the just penalty of sin, and the final perdition of the impenitent and incorrigible? What language can express, or what imagination conceive its full, its fearful import? It is not the extinction of its being, or the eternal loss of its self-consciousness, as the infidel dreams, when standing amidst the ruins of the tomb, he proclaims death an eternal sleep! No! what then is the death of the soul, but the extinction of its innocence, its purity, its spiritual life, its communion with God, its peace, its happiness, and its consignment to eternal condemnation and woe—a state of unmingled suffering and despair, amidst the torments of mutual recrimination and self-reproach, “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched!” Yet, from this death, so appalling and interminable, the converted soul shall be saved. “He that repenteth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy: He that believeth, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” He is even now in a state of salvation, cheered by the hope, and preparing for the consummation of its glory. And when, by the grace of God, he shall have finished his course, and kept the faith, his sanctification being complete, then, and not till then, shall he know the full value of being saved from death in the fruition of life eternal.

In saving a soul from death, he shall likewise hide a multitude of sins—a multitude already committed, and prevent a multitude more. Who can estimate the number and enormity of the sins which a sinner accumulates in this short



life, when he resigns himself to the impulse of a depraved heart—when his soul is every day and every hour estranged from God—when all his words and actions, his thoughts and feelings, are tinctured with evil? And yet, when the prodigal truly repents and returns to God, the hand of mercy hides all his sins, blots them all out from the book of heaven, wipes away their guilt and their penal consequences: and though they will live in his remembrance to awaken his humility and his tears, yet, the fruits of righteousness shall adorn the fields which sin had made desolate, and the place that once knew them, shall know them no more for ever!

If then you thus contemplate the vast importance of the salvation of one soul, which in its eternal duration, will prevent greater misery and confer greater happiness than the temporal deliverance of a whole kingdom; what greater motive can you need to make the attempt and to sustain the labour! But when it is probable that many souls may be saved by your exertions—when the conversion of one may become the medium of spiritual life to others beyond the sphere of your knowledge or the duration of your agency; the consideration assumes an importance and a grandeur which overwhelms all impediments, and carries us forward with a sweet and irresistible force.

2. *Consider the accordance of these means with the spirit and commands of the Gospel, and the express purpose of God in the economy of redemption.* Whether you advert to the cause, in which the necessity of the Gospel originates; to the prophecies which foretold its benefits; to the process and means of its development and conformation; to the terms in which it was announced by its divine Author; to the commission given to his Apostles; to the standing ordinances of the Christian Church, or to the spirit and tendency of the Gospel; you will see it is the incumbent duty of the Christian Church, in every age, and in all its branches, to seek the conversion of the world. Christianity is essentially a proselyting religion. The Christian who feels no concern, who makes no efforts, to christianize others, has yet to learn the essence of his faith, and the spirit of his Master. It is assumed in the text, and in all parts of the New Testament, that the disciples of Christ everywhere, and in all ages, will endeavour to carry on the work of the Apostles, till every sinner be converted to God, and every wanderer restored to the bosom of the faithful. What was the purpose of God in the economy of redemption, as formed by himself in the councils of eternity? What the design for which the Eternal Word became incarnate, and passed through the mysterious humiliation of the cross and of the tomb, and then rose to glory? What the end of that series of miracles which first accompanied the religion of Jesus, and impressed upon it the deep and indelible seal of the Living God? What was the design of all these wonders of mercy, but the recovery and salvation of the world? I ask not, what were the secret decrees, or what the prescience of the Divine Mind in reference to fallen man—but what is the revealed will, the declared purpose of the Eternal? And if it be true that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life; then it is equally true that he will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Instead of allowing the least demur lest your attempts to do good should exceed the compassion, or interfere with the secret purpose of God, the most explicit revelation of his will

condemns all indifference to this blessed cause, and commands every one to come forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty

3. *Consider the promise of Divine influence in connexion with human instrumentality, and the good already accomplished as a pledge of future success.* When the Apostles, without patronage, without learning, without eloquence, without ambition, went forth, in pursuance of their Lord's command, "to preach the Gospel to every creature," what could have impelled them to so strange, so perilous an undertaking, but the promise of the Spirit of God, and the consciousness of his supernatural presence and endowments? When, moreover, the superstition of the Gentile and the prejudice of the Jew—the scorn and contumely of the great—the pride and scepticism of the learned—the power and selfishness of the priesthood—the gross ignorance and idolatry of the populace—the corrupt taste and flagitious morals so long cherished by all classes, yea, when all the powers of darkness were arrayed against them, by what amazing force, but the power of the Holy Spirit, did the Apostles silently withstand and overcome this mighty confederacy of evil, and convert myriads from the most seductive forms of heathenism to the holy and humiliating doctrines of the cross; effecting in the moral and religious state of society a change which has no parallel in the moral history of the world? Nor let it be thought we are now cast upon our own resources, or left to contend alone with the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. No, the arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear. The promise annexed to the first commission still belongs to those who engage in the work, and the Lord still says for their encouragement, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The gift of the Spirit in his saving influence, is still the fruit of Christ's mediation, and will continue in connexion with human agency, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, to lead inquirers into all truth, and to cheer the hearts of the faithful, till the consummation of all things. And though in the operations of the Divine Spirit there is a sovereignty not to be controlled by human laws, yet it is not arbitrary nor uncertain, but in the right use of instituted means, is insured to us, by the economy of grace, by the express promise of Scripture, on principles of a moral and spiritual character, which operate with all the force and certainty of Divine Laws. And, as in nature, the husbandman who laboureth may assuredly calculate on the co-operation of Providence to fertilize the earth, so in the spiritual husbandry may the servants of the Lord expect the influence of his grace. Nor is this a new untried cause, in which theory alone stimulates exertion; but it is the work of ages, in which experience strengthens hope, and the good already achieved is the sure pledge of future conquests. We might therefore appeal to the triumph of truth in all ages, to the goodly company of the Prophets and Apostles, to the faithful evangelists, pastors, and missionaries of the Church, in every clime, to witness and animate your labours, confirming by their own testimony the assurance of ultimate success.

4 *Consider the subservience of the conversion of sinners to the glory of God,* promoting as it does, in every instance, the manifestation of his perfections, and the triumphs of his grace, in restoring fallen man to his image and favour for ever. Redemption, be it remembered, is the most glorious of the divine

works. Here his eternal purposes of wisdom and mercy are fully displayed, in the execution of which, from the commencement to the completion of all things, his moral perfections shine with the greatest harmony and lustre. It is here alone that he reveals himself in all the mysteriousness and beauty of his essential oneness, subsisting nevertheless in the person of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at once the Parent, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of his people. When, therefore, men are reclaimed from error and sin to the truth and purity of the Gospel, and become the subjects of his saving power, the perfections of God are more widely known and adored, his best purposes of love are accomplished; the empire of darkness recedes before the progress of light; the beauties of a new creation spring forth on the moral waste; the tabernacle of God is with men; and while his Spirit descends in copious streams, his servants are baptized into his name, and rise for ever to his glory. Let every concern you feel, then, for the divine glory—every obligation you owe to his cause—the blessings already received, and the still greater ones in prospect, urge you, brethren, to works of faith and labours of love, that the glory of the Lord may be more fully revealed, till all flesh shall see it together.

Finally, I might remind you of the holy satisfaction you will find in this good work, and the gracious reward which awaits the faithful, in the blessed results of their exertions, and the grateful recollections of eternity, when “they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.” I might remind you of the deep interest taken in the spread of truth and the growth of piety, by all holy intelligences, by the spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of angels; since the Lord himself assures us that “there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. I might also entreat you to anticipate the remote and final consequences of present success, in the perpetuity and growing extent of the Redeemer’s cause, and the gathering of many through successive generations to glory; the fruits of which will continue and abound in the mutual congratulations, the holy triumphs, the pure and heavenly worship, the unmingled joy of the redeemed for ever.

While, then, these several considerations, thus appealing to the understanding and to the heart, should constrain us in every place and by all the means in our power, to attempt the conversion of sinners, let them awaken your special regards, and call forth your liberal contributions, in aid of that Society for which I have the honour to plead this evening. And in reference to its claims, shall I direct you for a moment to the field of labour chosen for its operations, which you will find in the darkest provinces of our Sister Kingdom? And, whether we consider the important ties which bind Hibernia to Great Britain, as an integral part of the United Kingdom; whether we think of the sacred light which, in ages long past, illumined that beauteous isle, and thence shed its radiance upon Britain and other lands; whether we refer to the long course of misrule and calamity borne by Ireland since her subjection to this country; or, whether we reflect on the dark and perishing state of her crowded population, over whom, even now in the nineteenth century, the worst forms of popery are still brooding; what sphere of Christian benevolence can present itself to British Christians of every denomination, with claims more urgent, or with appeals more tender and powerful, than the one chosen by your Society?

Shall I then remind you of the means and agents employed by this Society so well adapted to the work, and now in a course of active and efficient operation? Its numerous schools for the education of poor children, founded on truly catholic principles, and conducted with the strictest economy, and under the best discipline: its Scripture readers, so pious and active, travelling from village to village, and from one cabin to another, and reading to small groups of attentive hearers the words of eternal life, and that too in their own native language, endeared to many of them by the fondest associations: its laborious itinerants, pastors, and superintendants, who devote their time and talents to this good work, amidst the privations of an impoverished people, and the hostility and scorn of a bigoted and superstitious priesthood. These are means and agents well adapted to the sphere of their labours, eminently calculated, under God, to disperse the darkness of papal ignorance and superstition, and to restore its victims to the saving light and influence of the Gospel. And yet amidst all their toils and difficulties, they are sustained and supported, not by the ample resources of a wealthy establishment, but by the free contributions of Christian liberality from year to year replenishing the funds of this Society.

And shall I finally remind you of the good already accomplished by its efforts, and the growing urgency of its demands? Several thousand children and adults are now in a course of scriptural instruction by means of this Society. Ten Christian churches have been collected by its agents, and in the regular administration of Christian ordinances, and the enjoyment of Christian fellowship, are cheered by the prospect of future usefulness and growing prosperity. And from the commencement of its labours to the present time, *upwards of one hundred and fifty thousand individuals have received Christian instruction in the channels this Society affords*, many of whom we trust have been, or will be, the subjects of renewing grace, and the recipients of eternal salvation. But, though the business of the Society is conducted *gratuitously*, and all its plans carried on in the most frugal manner, I am sorry to add, that the treasurer is now in advance, or under acceptances, for *more than a thousand pounds*; so that while the good already accomplished is encouraging, we are compelled to couple with it the growing urgency of its demands, and the painful inadequacy of its present resources.

But I forbear to enlarge, assured of your readiness to aid an institution so worthy of support. Much has been said of late, and well said, on the sufficiency of the voluntary principle to meet all the claims of Christian benevolence; and I trust you will this evening give a further demonstration of the sentiment, that the funds of the Society may be replenished, and the spirits of its agents and directors be refreshed by the fruits of your liberality. Many of its earliest friends and agents, who encountered its first difficulties, and rejoiced in its first achievements, have finished their course, and left the cause to their successors. During this year the Society has sustained a severe loss in the removal of one of its first and most laborious friends, the REV. JOSEPH IVIMEY, who so long and so efficiently filled the office of its gratuitous Secretary, and devoted so much of his time and energies to the work. If in his last moments, so happily sustained by the hopes and consolations of the Gospel, there was any burden of anxiety upon his mind, it must have been the burden of a benevolent and prayerful solicitude for "The Irish Society," that its funds and its usefulness



may be increased a thousand fold, and that his immortal spirit may meet in glory many of the sons and daughters of Erin, brought to the Saviour by its means. And if the spirits of the just made perfect descend to take an interest in the proceedings of the church below, doubtless, the disembodied spirit of your departed secretary will hover around you on the present occasion, and during the solemnities of this week, to rejoice in the progress of this good cause, to witness the fruits of your beneficence and zeal, and to report in heaven the offerings of holy gratitude and love you will now pour into the treasury of the Lord. But why should I suggest such a thought, when we are sure of the presence of one Friend and Benefactor, who loved us even unto death, and yet ever liveth to carry on his cause, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; who still walks in the midst of his churches, holding the stars in his right hand, while he searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, that he may give unto every one according to his works. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, "be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

## THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

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REV. H. BLUNT, A.M.

TRINITY CHURCH, SLOANE STREET, CHELSEA, JUNE 22, 1834.

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"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work."  
COLOSSIANS, i. 10.

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IT is a remarkable assertion of the Apostle to the Corinthians, but not more remarkable, obviously, than true, that "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." And who can doubt it? And without any reference to the obvious fact, that while the two former are transitory, the last is perpetual, is it not evident that, after all, faith and hope are but as the scaffolding to support the house, while the house itself, the glorious superstructure, is love—love to God, and love to man; love to every created being throughout all time, and love to the blessed inmates of the heavenly mansions throughout eternity. The object, then, of all religion is to give men the power and the will, which they have not by nature, to live that life of love on earth, that they may be fitted and educated for an eternity of love in heaven. Every thing connected with this high feeling, is comprised in Scripture in the expressive term "good works;" and it is to this important subject, that the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth articles of our Church, will, this morning, direct our attention.

There are four great errors, continually springing up in the heart of man, with respect to this deeply interesting doctrine; these have been detected by our Church in the three articles to which I have referred; and which shall be taken together as the subject of our consideration. We shall briefly refer to these errors, that you may see with what peculiar propriety, and with what remarkable distinctness and precision, our Church applies itself to the task of preserving her members from their danger.

The first of these errors, namely, *that a man can be justified before God for his works' sake*, was sufficiently considered under the eleventh article; and therefore will not require our attention at present.

The second of these is, *that all works of honesty, and charity, and uprightness, must be so pleasing in the sight of God, that let them be performed by whom they may, they cannot fail to call down on the performer the love, the mercy, or the grace of God*: that, in fact, they at least render men competent to receive this favour, even if they do not actually purchase it. Against this error—the error indeed expressly of the Pelagians, but not less the error of the natural and unconverted heart—the thirteenth article protests against in the following decisive manner: "*Of works before Justification.*"

—You will observe our Church takes especial care not to recognise them as *good* works, although she is evidently referring to those which are called so in the world: she contents herself with calling them “Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school-authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but that they have the nature of sin.”

There are few articles of the Church which are more staggering to the heart of the natural man than this, and yet few that more immediately have approved themselves to the hearts of the converted people of God. It simply asserts, that no works perform before justification—that is, before we have been led to close with the offer of a crucified Redeemer, and have thus been accounted righteous through his merits—are pleasant to God. But consider only for a moment, the declaration of the articles which precede this, and you will see it is impossible to come to any other conclusion. For instance, the ninth article has declared, that we are all “far gone from original righteousness,” that “the flesh is always lusting against the spirit, and deserving God’s wrath and damnation.” The tenth article has shown, that from this condition man cannot turn himself without the grace of God, and, therefore, “has no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God.” It is, then, the following consequence of these great, and solemn, and humiliating truths, that every work done before the grace of God, must be unpleasant to God, and even—as a clause of the article strongly, but not more strongly than scripturally, asserts—“must have the nature of sin.” We say, not more strongly than scripturally; for the Apostle to the Romans has asserted the same thing, almost in the same words, when he says, “Whatsoever”—making no distinction for works of amiability or kindness—“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

This is a portion of the subject which is a stumbling-block to many. The feelings of their minds with respect to it—and they may be the feelings of the minds of many among yourselves—are of this nature “Can it be possible that all the amiable, honest, just, and honourable actions of a man’s life, before he has received the grace of Christ, can possess the nature of sin, in the sight of our merciful Father? Is he so severe a judge, that he will not look with an eye of satisfaction on those many virtuous beings, virtuous men, who gladden the countenances, and cheer the souls, of all around them, and make the widow’s heart to sing for joy?” This is, perhaps, stating the objection as fairly and as strongly as it can be stated: and yet we doubt not that a very little consideration will induce you to agree with the justice of the verdict which our Church pronounces in such a case as this, when it pronounces that “they have the nature of sin.”

You will then observe, from the words before us, that the Church gives the reason for her decision, which is too frequently overlooked: she says, that these works have the nature of sin simply because “they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done.” God has commanded, not that they shall be left undone, but that they shall be done from love to his name; that they shall be the fruits of a true and living faith. If then they are performed but performed from any other motive, (for it is unnecessary to refer to their

inherent imperfections and corruptions) but if they are performed from any other motive than God has commanded, it is clear that, as regards God and the actor of those works, they have the nature of sin; they are the breach of a command, instead of the fulfilment of one; and, however estimable in the sight of our fellow-men, cannot be pleasant to Him to whose will they are opposed. For instance, if we are careful to obtain the praise of men, if we are benevolent to gratify the feelings of the heart, or the desires of ambition—if we are liberal because it flatters our vanity—if we are just because it satisfies our high-mindedness—if we are kind and condescending because it ministers to our pride, or even the kindly feelings of our heart; can we affect surprise, that, however pleasing to God the feelings, taken abstractedly, they have the nature of sin when taken with reference to the actor, and are really sinful as regards his motives, his principles, his objects?

There is an incident in ancient history that may illustrate this. You recollect in Roman story, that at a time when the discipline of the army peculiarly required the most entire and positive obedience to the orders of the commander, that commander forbade that any individual should leave the ranks on any pretence, under pain of immediate death. The order was, as you well remember, violated by his own son, who indignant at the insults, and menaces, and scorn of some champion of the enemy, spurred forth to meet him, and having slain him in single combat, brought back the trophies to his father's feet. I need not remind you, that the conqueror was ordered to immediate execution. The act of heroism, which if performed in obedience to his commander would have deserved and received a crown, performed as it was in opposition to the command, conducted its executor, with perfect justice, to the scaffold. We are not defending the humanity of the act, but its justice, which is the only part that touches our argument. It was just that Manlius should order his son to execution; it is just that God should visit with displeasure, and treat as sins, those acts, which however grateful to the natural feelings are destitute of all that can be of value in his eyes, because they are done with no single reference to himself, because they are performed neither in obedience to his will, nor in love and honour to his name, nor with any desire after his glory.

The third error into which men have fallen, respecting good works is, that *it is possible to present so large an abundance of them to God, in the life of a truly converted man of God, that he may render far more out of his great zeal and love to God than God ever requires at his hand.* This I need scarcely tell you, is the Romish doctrine of works of supererogation; and this you will find disposed of in the fourteenth article of our Church. But upon that we need not dwell. If there be a Protestant inclined to maintain so unscriptural a dogma, it is enough for him to consider what God really does require, before we presume to pronounce that man can be innocent. Almost a single extract from the Divine Word will set this at rest for ever. Our Lord himself has said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." It is perfectly evident, then, that before works of supererogation can commence, works positively enjoined and commanded must have been completed. We do not then ask, where is



the man that has this perfect love to God and his neighbour; but we may fairly ask, supposing such an one loving God with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his strength, and his neighbour as himself, supposing such an one could be found (which we know to be impossible)—What possibility could exist of even this man giving more love, and doing more duties, than could be given when he gave the *whole* heart, or done when he was already engaged with the *utmost efforts* of his whole soul, and mind, and strength? The inquiry involves a contradiction even in terms; the point is too obvious to reason upon, and our article therefore wisely shuts it up with this single observation: “Christ saith plainly, when ye have done all these things, say, We are unprofitable servants.”

But there is yet a fourth error with respect to this same subject, the very contrary to those which we have already considered, but still not less an error than those which have preceded. This is the error of the Antinomians, who contend, *that in the persons of the justified people of God, neither evil works nor good works are of any account*; that sin in them will not offend God, and that works of piety, or holiness, or charity, will not please him: in fact, that every thing beyond the one great doctrine, and the one great privilege of the justified—the being in Christ, is utterly valueless and immaterial.

It is for the purpose of counteracting this most dangerous and licentious doctrine, as well as establishing that truth which we considered in the last discourse, that we are not accounted righteous for our own works or deservings, that the twelfth article was appointed. These are the words of the article: “*Of Good Works.* Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith, may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.”

Upon the former part of this article, which refers to the first error that we have enumerated, which plainly declares that good works cannot put away our sins, we need not dwell, having shown this from the word of God and the authority of our Church, while explaining the doctrine of justification: neither need we corroborate it by our homilies; it is sufficient to refer you to the Homily in Three Parts, dedicated to this express subject, and the Homily on Good Works. We will therefore only add a striking lesson, too valuable to be decried, from the admirable sermon of Hooker, from which we quoted on the last occasion, and which is as clear as to the necessity of good works in their place, and the utter fruitlessness of good works out of their place, as the last passage we cited was upon the nature of the sinner’s justification. These are his words “The best things we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned; how then can we do any thing meritorious or worthy of reward? wherefore we acknowledge the dutiful necessity of doing well; but the meritorious dignity of doing well we utterly renounce. We see how far we are from the perfect righteousness of the law: the little fruit we have in holiness is (God knoweth;) corrupt and unsound; we put no confidence in it; we challenge nothing in the world for it. We dare not call God to reckoning as if we had him in our debt books: our continual prayer is, and must be, to bear with our infirmities, and pardon our offences.”

The article before us having decided this point, continues most justly and

scripturally to observe, though good works "cannot put away our sins," which the mere legalist believes that they can, or "endure the severity of God's judgment," which the Council of Trent expressly decreed that they could; "yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith." Nothing can be more Scripturally correct, or more Scripturally guarded, than these expressions of our Church: they give that weight and prominency to good works which the word of God gives, but nothing further: they do not even distinctly assert, that no man can enter heaven without good works; because though unquestionably such is the rule, yet the compilers of our articles well knew, that there might be, and indeed must be, many exceptions to that rule: for as the first part of the Homily on Good Works, quaintly, but truly, says, "I will shew you a man that by faith, without works, lived and obtained heaven, but without faith never man had life. The thief that was hanged when Christ suffered did believe only, and the most merciful God saved him: but because no man shall say again, that he lacked time, or else he would have done well, true it is, and I will truly affirm, that faith only saves." As long as we believe in the possibility of what is called a death-bed repentance, however rare—and such I believe, notwithstanding the opinions of many modern divines that the people of God still believe—as long as we do not exclude from heaven, even those who are called to God at the eleventh hour, and at the last closing scene of life, are led by the grace of God to lay hold of that salvation which Christ has purchased for them, or, in the language of Holy Writ, "to apprehend that for which also they are apprehended of Christ Jesus"—so long we must also believe that it is possible for a truly penitent and converted sinner to enter into the kingdom of God, with a heart and affections fully prepared to bring forth a harvest of good works to the glory of God, though time and opportunity have been on earth denied him.

It is, however, of the rule, and not of its exceptions, that we speak, and all Scripture demonstrates that the rule is this: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." We say that all Scripture is full of this important doctrine; asserting at one time, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love:" at another, shewing they are pleasing and acceptable to God, when it declares, "God is not unrighteous to forget your works and labour of love:" and again, "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

But, brethren, it is not enough that we acknowledge this as a mere orthodox Scriptural truth; the question is, Do we steadily, perseveringly, and constantly, act on it as the motto of our lives? Are we thus engaged in bringing forth much fruit to the glory of God? What a libel upon Christianity are the unfruitful lives of its professors—the worldly followers of a religion, one of whose first injunctions is, that "the world should be crucified unto us, and we unto the world,"—the self-pleasing followers of the Saviour, who distinctly declared, "Whosoever doth not bear my cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple?"—the unkind, and unamiable, and unlovely followers of Him, whose example and word has said, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

Let us then, in conclusion, shortly apply the great lesson before us. And here it is obvious that I can address myself only to the converted and renewed people of God; and for this simple reason, that, as we have seen from the twelfth and thirteenth articles, that none others but they who are really justified before God can perform what Holy Scripture and our Church denominates, "Good Works." To you, then, we would not be content to say, you must be just, and honourable, and charitable, and amiable, and condescending, and humble, and meek, and affectionate, and true: but we would say more than this; we would say with the Apostle, "*Whatsoever* things are true, *whatsoever* things are honest, *whatsoever* things are just, *whatsoever* things are pure, *whatsoever* things are lovely, *whatsoever* things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of and practise those things." Yea, we may go further still, and say, with that most divine Master, "What do ye more than others?" implying, in the strongest possible manner, that the followers of God must not only *believe* more, but they must *do* more than others. So far from the free salvation of which you are the blessed subjects, exonerating you in any the smallest degree, from these first duties, which it is the boast of the world (though God knows it is an empty boast) that they perform—more, infinitely more, is expected from the godly man, than is ever aimed at by the worldly man. Is the man of the world, for instance, punctual in all his engagements, upright and honourable in every thing which he undertakes? You must be more scrupulously so; you must excel in the measure of good works, as much as you, undoubtedly, already excel in the motive of good works. He performs all these duties because they are expected of him by his fellow-men; because they are part and parcel of that code of honour, to which every high-minded man in the world considers himself amenable, and without a scrupulous attention to which, he could not, for a single day, maintain his footing in society. You are expected to perform them, and if you are sincere followers of God, you will perform them as the fruits of a true and lively faith. Knowing how much God has done for you, utterly undeserving, you will endeavour to act in such a manner towards your fellow-men, though equally undeserving, not as shall best serve your interests in a selfish world, but that shall be most acceptable to the nature and purity of a God of justice, and a God of love. Gratitude alone would ensure this at your hands; for, knowing what you have received, you should always be asking "What shall I render?" But more than gratitude demands it; your good works must be the fruits and evidence of your gratitude: but they must also be more—they must be the fruits of a true and lively faith. Without holiness no man can see the Lord; and has not the Word of God itself declared, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the door of salvation only unto them that obey him?

We do not scruple, therefore, to tell you, that "Faith without works is dead, being alone;" that you may boast of the highest spiritual attainments, and the most exalted faith, and the deepest experience, and yet wanting those Christian virtues which endear man to his fellows, and which liken him to the meek, and lowly, and forgiving, and compassionate Redeemer, you are, in reality, destitute of that saving faith from which they necessarily spring, and you have, therefore, neither part nor lot in the salvation which it secures.

My Christian brethren I own I feel it necessary to speak strongly upon this subject, because we firmly believe, that one unholy, inconsistent, or even fruitless, professor of religion, does more injury to the true cause of the Redeemer, than many open profligates. And yet, alas, are there none such fruitless, inconsistent, professors among ourselves? Are there none who, holding all the great and saving truths of the Gospel with the most perfect accuracy, yet may they not learn many a lesson of amiability, of disinterestedness, and humility, of brotherly kindness, and affectionate forbearance, from some who are not yet known to be partakers of the grace of Christ? Are there none who would feel it very difficult, in looking back only on the week which has just closed on us, to distinguish a single good work, or single fruit of faith, laid by them as a thank-offering upon the altar of their God? Surely these things ought not so to be; for is it not thus, my Christian brethren, that we "cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of," the truth of our God to be blasphemed, the Saviour to be wounded in the house of his friends, and the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, with its one great truth—justification by faith alone, to be treated by the infidel and the malevolent, as an unholy and licentious falsehood.

If, therefore, you love the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, if you love the Saviour who proclaimed it, if you love your own souls and your own eternity, you must be "unwearied," as the Apostle says, in well-doing: whether it be the spiritual duties, or the temporal duties, that the occasion demands, be first and foremost in them all. "Whatsoever your hand findeth you to do, do it with all your might;" letting "your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify," not you, but "your Father which is in heaven:" being "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."



## COMING TO CHRIST.

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HON. AND REV. B. W. NOEL, A.M.

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, JULY 13, 1834.

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“And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.”—MARK, v. 34.

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OUR course were a very melancholy one, my brethren, through this world, if we had not to do with a Saviour who abounds in grace and mercy. The Lord Jesus Christ is overflowing with kindness to all that seek his blessing; and, therefore, though we are weak, and live in the midst of an ensnaring world, and though we have many sins to deplore, and for which we all have need of forgiveness, yet with such a Saviour our souls may be kept in peace, because we are assured that he is at all times ready to receive us on our application to him for pardon and for peace, in the exercise of faith.

This very consolatory truth is brought to our view most instructively, in that brief narrative, of which the text that I have read forms a part. The poor woman, to whom our Lord addressed the words of my text, had been infirm and sick for many years; had tried various remedies, which were of no avail; and after she had spent all she had in endeavouring to effect a cure, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse, then, when other physicians failed, she had recourse to Jesus Christ. She believed him to be, from the evidence that had been brought before her, a prophet sent from God; and thinking that he could accomplish for her a cure, like that which she had heard had been accomplished in the case of others, she at once determined to seek relief from him. Therefore, apparently too humble to address him in person, or to suppose his attention should be occupied with her, she said, “If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole.” She believed that he was so holy a person, and one whom God so blessed, that that act, if accompanied by faith, and originated in faith, would receive that blessing from God, which she had heard had been experienced by others. She therefore came to Jesus, and while the crowds thronged around him, and pressed him on every side, she touched the hem of his garment, and was immediately healed.

There is, my brethren, a much closer analogy between our case and hers, than some of us may, perhaps, at first sight, be disposed to believe: and it is that analogy that makes the narrative so instructive to us. In the first place, like her, *we have a need of Christ*. Unless we find spiritual healing from him, we shall find it nowhere else. Whatever be the spiritual disorder we have to

lament, we shall in vain look for a cure to any human device, or any method of our own.

If any in this assembly are still destitute of *the pardon of God for their sins*, by what means shall they secure the forgiveness they hope for? Can they ever render him a service which can atone for the past? Is it possible that they shall not still accumulate guilt upon guilt; and if they look to their own conduct, must they not ever find reason for the divine anger, rather than any justification of the past? So that, if any need the pardon of their sins from a holy God, they have a need of Christ.

If any in this assembly are seeking that *renewal of their nature* which is necessary to fit them for the employment and blessedness of the heavenly world, how can they attain it? Is there anything in their own resolutions? Are their resolutions strong enough, or their efforts sufficiently efficacious, to effect a change of the heart, the mind, and the life? They will ever, in proportion to their efforts, discover the prevalency of evil; sin will ever have the dominion over them, as long as they have no better strength than their own; the corruptions of their nature will hurry them still to transgressions, while perhaps proudly imagining that a little more diligence, and a little more resolution, will secure the change they feel will be necessary ere they can reach eternal glory. If they are proudly expecting that change from themselves, they will find, alas, to their own cost, that sin is stronger than their resolution, and to the last they will remain as ungodly, and as far from heaven, as they are at this moment. So that, if any seek a renewal of his nature, he has a need of Christ.

If any are already changed by divine grace, and have received the pardon of their sins, through Christ, yet still in *that conflict which it is ordained they shall wage with remaining sins*, can they have success, have they ever realized success, through their own exertions? Have they not again and again found, that "without me they can do nothing;" so that those who are engaged in any kind of spiritual conflict with sin within them, have as much at this day, as at the first hour when they believed in Christ, a need of him? In all our spiritual distresses and dangers, we have an absolute need of Christ. Our blessings, brethren, from the first to the last, come exclusively from him; he is the origin of all. If one believer is distinguished from another by pre-eminence in any grace, he owes it exclusively to the Saviour. There may be a difference between the brilliancy of the diamond and the pebble, but both derive their brilliancy and colour, whatever it may be, from the light that is around them: in darkness they will be equally undistinguished. And it is so with the graces of Christ's people; one has more of humility, and gratitude, and devotedness than another; but it is all from Christ, without whom they would be equally colourless, without virtue, without grace, without hope. From him exclusively all our blessings are derived.

And it is necessary, in order to secure these blessings, that we should have *a sense of our need*. Without such a sense, that woman would never have sought relief from him; and without that sense of our need, we shall never heartily apply to Christ for the blessings that we require. As long as we suppose that a slight change, or a little penitence, and a little contrition, will bring for us the blessings, whatever they are, of a spiritual kind, which we

need, so long, not heartily applying to Christ, Jesus for the blessings that we want, we shall go empty away. And thus, there is a deep sense of need, when a person has experienced his own weakness, and feels the burden of his guilt, whether believer, or whether still unrenewed, if he once find that he has no other resource but in Christ, and that Christ's help is absolutely needful for his welfare in both worlds, when he is urged by strong necessity to betake himself to that Christ, that he may find in him the blessing which he requires.

Again, like her, *we have nothing to offer for the blessing we desire.* She brought to him no payment for that which she sought; if it was to be bestowed, it was to be bestowed freely. It is so with all our mercies; we can offer nothing to Christ; and, blessed be his name, he requires nothing from us. Did he ask us to atone for our long negligence, or our inconsistencies, we must remain still destitute of the slightest blessing from him: but he asks nothing; what he gives he gives freely. It is the characteristic of the Gospel, that Christ's people receive all and return nothing. It is the characteristic of the Christian, that he is replenished with the graces of Christ; it is this more than anything else, marks the Christian—that he receives all from Christ. It is true he is made active, grateful, devoted; it is true he renounces sin, and mortifies all that is earthly within him: but still this adds nothing to the Saviour; it is rather the effect of his gifts than a payment for them: the Christian renounces it all. Some persons speak as though they were Christians, because they have adopted a certain set of opinions; whereas that marks any one to be a Christian, that he has found his all in Christ, and looks nowhere else for his blessing—that he is empty, guilty, weak, miserable, deserving of the eternal displeasure of God, but has found in Christ his all-sufficient Saviour—and whose religion is, to receive the blessings that he freely gives, gratefully and humbly, without pride. Thus, brethren, we come to him as she came, to receive our mercies freely.

Again, there is this further resemblance between her case and ours, that, like her, *we come to a willing benefactor*; one who is more ready to bless us than we are to bless. And this is strictly true; true beyond all that we can imagine. I am persuaded, that it is as much the nature of Christ to diffuse blessings to all who ask him, as it is for the sun to diffuse its beams on all the objects beneath: and if any one lacketh that blessing from Christ, it is because he has intercepted the rays that come from him, that would otherwise beam upon his soul: it is not because Christ is unwilling to bless, but he is unwilling to be blessed. In trifling, in levity, in scorn, in self-righteousness, in sin, he has enclosed himself as within the massive walls of a dungeon; and he can have no cause to complain if he has not the light of the sun. Jesus Christ is ready to bless such, and he is ready to bless all; he is waiting to be gracious. He has told us again and again, it is his delight to bring back returning sinners; that his object was to come and make the ignorant wise, to make the rebellious loyal, to make those who are the heirs of hell the heirs of heaven: he came to seek those that were lost; and it is the will of our blessed Master in heaven to bless all; there is no need for any to go empty away. But if self-righteousness, and scorn, and the love of this present world, will hinder men from applying to Christ, it is fitting they go without the blessing. But we are sure that it is his nature to bless, it is his will to bless; and he is occupied, daily and hourly, in drawing

many of those sinners to him who were hardened, and unbelieving, and ignorant. Day by day is he receiving numbers to his kingdom, led to seek for happiness in him, occupied in receiving them again ; sinners of every kind and of every degree, day by day, find in the Lord Jesus Christ such blessings. On all that are ready to receive that blessing, he is ready to bestow. We go to a gracious benefactor, when we go to Christ, like this poor woman, whom he did not turn away.

There is another particular in which we resemble her, and that is, that *in the exercise of faith we shall as surely receive the blessing as she did*. Let us remember, that her case was by no means singular, but, on the contrary it appears to have been the general habit of our Lord, to bless those who sought him, just as she sought him. We find in Luke, vi. 19, that "the whole multitude sought to touch him,"—just as this poor woman did—"for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." So that, doubtless, she had heard instances in which cures had been effected, precisely in the manner in which she sought the cure, and was only expressing the faith that the effects brought before her notice justified her in exercising. So those remarkable cures which we read of, especially in the Evangelists, are always, all of them, expressly associated with the exercise of faith. The poor paralytic, who was let down by his friends from the roof, that he might be near Jesus, when the multitude so thronged him that he could not enter the house, was especially blessed, because our Lord saw their faith. And the blind men, who followed Jesus, and cried, "Have mercy on us," were blessed according to their faith. And blind Bartimeus was blessed according to his faith. And when those ten lepers were healed, to the one that remained our Lord said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." When Mary Magdalen was blamed by the proud Pharisee at whose house she anointed the feet of Jesus, our Saviour said to her, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." When the poor Syrophenician mother sought to cure her daughter that was possessed of a devil, our Saviour said unto her, "Oh woman, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee as thou wilt." Thus on all occasions did our blessed Saviour especially honour this exercise of faith.

My brethren, the exercise of faith now in the Saviour, is just what it was then. Thus, if this exercise of faith honoured Jesus by proving that those who came to him thus estimated him to have come from God, and to be that holy being he professed to be, so does the exercise of faith honour him now ; and if it was his glory thus to bless the exercise of faith, so as on every occasion to attach a blessing to it when it was exercised, it will be as much for his glory to attach a blessing to it now ; and those who exercise faith in him now, as those exercised it then, may expect from him a blessing. Besides, he has given us the most direct promises in this matter, he has said in Matthew, xix, 28, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now the only way of coming to Christ (for there is no pretence to limiting it to his brief ministry on earth) the only way of coming to Christ is, applying to him by prayer, in the exercise of faith. Again, in St. John, he has distinctly promised this : "He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "In no wise ;" it is contrary to his nature ; it is against all the experience of all that ever applied to him. It would contradict the purpose for which he came into this world, if those who did thus apply to him were cast out. The only condition on which any one may be accepted is, that he comes to Christ :



may it is not enough to say, that he who exercises faith *will be* received; he ~~is~~ received the moment he exercises faith, by the exercise of a simple faith in Christ. There is no other condition of our receiving all the blessings than the grace of faith in Christ, he that exercises faith will surely in that faith receive blessings from God, for "He is ready to save unto the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The only merit of the sinner is the merit of the Saviour; and that which makes the merit of the Saviour applicable to the sinner is his belief in him: so that the moment he exercises that faith, that moment is the hindrance to his receiving spiritual blessings prostrated and destroyed; and he is now welcomed to God, not because he is innocent, but because the merit of the Saviour is available to his eternal well-being. So whenever we come to Christ in the exercise of faith, we are sure to receive the blessings which we seek. If we want the pardon of our sins, that pardon is given to those who exercise faith in him. If we want the renewal of our nature, it is produced by the exercise of faith in him. If we want our corruptions destroyed, after we have believed the Lord Jesus, again we must exercise faith in him; if we want our souls calmed and tranquillized in the midst of trouble, again we must exercise faith in him. All spiritual blessings are ours, if only with this poor woman we believe in his goodness and grace, and come to him as that overflowing fountain of all good, ever more delighting to bless us than we are to be blessed.

While we see that it is faith to which the blessing is attached, we learn, at the same time, that *those blessings cannot be obtained from Christ in any other manner than by the exercise of faith*. Whatever the power of grace within us, whatever views of grace we entertain, whatever honour we may seem to give in words to our Saviour, it is not thus that we obtain the blessing. There were many who touched Christ besides this poor woman, but their touch did not bring them that blessing which she received by it. It was not the touch that blessed her, it was not the hem of his garment that blessed her, but she obtained the blessing through faith. Just so it is in the use of the different means which Christ has prescribed: it is not simply believing the word which Christ has left us for our instruction; it is not simply in recognizing him as our Master and Lord; but we must exercise the faith with which the touch in her case was accompanied, and then the blessing will be ours. Unless by the grace of God we have entertained that real belief in him as a Saviour, pouring out blessings upon our needy soul, as a living present Saviour, we never can have from God the blessings which we ask.

But while again we say it was faith which brought this blessing to the poor woman who touched the hem of his garment, it was not properly faith which did it either; *nor is it properly faith which brings the blessing to us, but it is Christ who brings it through the instrumentality of faith*. That faith has no power to effect one cure, any more than the means she employed. Faith itself can no more cure now by its intrinsic and natural power; but it is God, who would honour his own, who accompanies the touch and that exercise of faith with a blessing: and it is God, through Christ, must, by his grace, bless us when we exercise faith in him. Christ Jesus again, I must entreat you to remember, is the exclusive source of our blessings; and we must no more substitute faith in the place of the Redeemer, than we substitute grace for any other

work. Christ Jesus alone has purchased them ; Christ Jesus alone can give them ; we must go directly to him. Faith is no more but a stretching out of the arms to receive the alms he bestows ; nothing more than the asking him for that he gladly gives. If we thus ask, he is ever ready to bestow ; “ He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

But here, at the same time, we must notice, that *we may not have the blessing we ask immediately upon our seeking*. Here our case may possibly differ from hers : the moment that she touched the hem of our Redeemer’s garment, she obtained the cure she sought. It may please him to delay the blessing we seek ; though our faith may be as strong, though our sense of need may be as complete, though our desires may be as fervent, though we may be more impatient than she was, yet still it may please him to delay the blessing. Yet, let us remember, he never delays the blessing because reluctant to bestow it ; he never delays the blessing because he is capricious, and doubtful whether he shall bestow it : he never will delay it on any other ground than because he knows it to be best ; and the blessing will be better when it is at length obtained. Our Redeemer ever bestows the blessing in proportion to the strength of faith, the earnestness and the perseverance of desire ; and if he sees that we are weak and feeble, and that our desires are vacillating, then it may be necessary that the blessing be not bestowed until faith and desire are both strengthened. He may delay the blessing because by that faith and desire are strengthened ; just as he delayed the blessing which Jacob sought ; just as he delayed the blessing which he intended to give the Syrophenician petitioner ; so he may delay ours ; not because he is ungracious, not because he is unwilling to give the blessing he knows we need, but that we may desire more, that we may be more humble, more dependant, more feeling our need of him, more recognize the grace that bestows it, be more grateful when we receive it, watch against the recurrence of those evils under which we are groaning, learn to be patient under his hand, and feel that whatever he appoints is for the best ; acknowledging that however severe the treatment he may think necessary to give, it is, after all, more lenient than we deserve, and that we ought to be patient under his mighty hand. Therefore, though he delays the blessing, at the appointed time and in the best manner, the blessing is given.

But let me entreat you to remember, that *though he may delay the blessing, yet no prayer, and no exercise of faith is ever lost*. It is one of those series of believing efforts requisite to the blessing ; neglect the effort, and you postpone the blessing ; forego it, and perhaps you forfeit that blessing : whereas, if prayer reach the ear of Christ, and the ear of God by Christ, the blessing you seek shall be yours. If it is thus indeed that our Saviour blesses those who come to him, as this sick woman came to him, how much is it to be deplored that so many so long delay and neglect application to him for his mercies ! Like her, how many are disposed to try every physician before they come to Christ ! It should not be so. Why do our hearts take so much teaching before we come to believe the sweetest of all truths—that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour ? Why is it we turn away from those modes of obtaining pardon and heaven, which might appear to us equally absurd and undesirable ? Why is it that so many are seeking from themselves what they never can obtain, and what Christ is so ready to bestow ? But so it is ; we want the blessing, but we want it languidly ; we

desire that Christ may hear our prayers, but our desires are so weak and changeable: we have some confidence that he is ready to bless us, but that confidence is so imperfect: the language of our hearts is, "Lord, I believe," but there is unbelief that mingles with it, and perhaps we do not unite with it the prayer, "Help thou mine unbelief." We desire it so languidly, that it is no wonder we do not get the blessing. And then, when that is our condition, we have numerous sorrows and difficulties that often present themselves. Many are restless and uneasy, because they are discontented with themselves; they can perceive that their condition is not safe; they know it is one that is unbecoming; they have had repeated proofs that they never can win for themselves the blessing they need, and therefore they are unhappy: and if they seek to remove the sense of unhappiness, they only augment the evil they wish to remove. And if they seek to palliate this feeling by an assiduous discharge of duties, (while there is no faith, and gratitude, and sincerity of heart in those round of duties,) which never fails in accomplishing the object they intend, still they are unhappy, still there is a worm that gnaws at the root of all their joys. And so it ever must be, till they come heartily to Christ; no other physician can cure the disorder that they want to remove. And oh that I could persuade those that are in this condition, that they never can find solid peace, except in coming simply and truly to the Saviour, to have their sins pardoned through his blood, their sins removed by his grace, their every burden taken from them, and guilt removed from the conscience, and the power of sin destroyed; to have the Spirit granted through faith in him. Do not, I beseech you, any longer delay, with your burdens on your hearts and consciences, but see in this poor woman the picture of your own case; and if it is only touching the hem of Christ's garment to find the blessing you need, do not delay any longer, lest you receive severer chastisement. For this is often the case: Christ may see fit to bring you to a sense of your need. If you are not anxious to overcome your own will, and if you do not come to Christ to overcome that will, you will be left to severer chastisement, and exposed to greater trial: therefore come to him at once, that you may be healed. If you do not now ask the pardon of your unregenerate nature and conduct, it may be that you will be left to greater darkness and greater unbelief: perhaps, indeed, you may never find the auspicious moment when you will come to Christ at all. If you are not anxious now to receive at once the renewal of your nature, but will go on with a bare form of religion in which there is no reality, the moment may never come in which your nature shall be changed. Oh, my friends, do not wait till God punishes you more, but now feel that there is a Saviour for the lost; now come to him this very day; strive to have faith in his mercy; now seek from his Holy Spirit the willingness that you need; and may you thus come and obtain the blessing which will make you happy for eternity!

But if any among you have found in Christ pardon for the past, and know you may obtain from him the strength you require, so that you go to him day by day for that blessing, then remember *it is your duty to give him that glory which he commanded from her*. He singled her out from the crowd that surrounded him, and made her publicly confess the blessing she received, because that confession should give him glory, and strengthen the faith of other sufferers. So does he expect from those that have received his grace and

blessing, and are walking in happiness and security through his mercy, that they should give him glory; to ascribe to Christ Jesus all the blessings which you really enjoy, and praising him day by day, still to seek higher blessings from his hand; that the world may be obliged to confess how mighty and beneficent his grace is, and may be ready to apply to him through your happy experience.

And, lastly, if there are any that receive these blessings from Christ, and know the blessings he gives from day to day, surely it is your duty to *employ your experience of the past to help your brethren that are likewise in trouble*. Our Lord has given us two directions, in the beautiful address he made to Peter shortly before his crucifixion. We read in Luke, xxii. 31, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you"—to have you all, to have all my disciples—"that he may sift you as wheat:" he wished that he might be permitted to have them, that he might assail them with such severe and numerous temptations, that every corruption of the heart and character might be brought out, and that nothing might be left behind but the pure grace of Christ—he hath "desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:" they would pass through that ordeal; and among them Peter would be tried; but Peter who would have a severer experience of Satan's malice and his own inconsistency, received likewise that gracious help, which the prayer of Christ would bestow; "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted,"—that is, when he was changed from those peculiar weaknesses, and those peculiar propensities that were to be eradicated, for he was already a child of God—"when thou art converted," when those besetting evils are gone, which he must escape by passing through these severe trials, then "strengthen thy brethren." Thus it may be that some of the children of God, here, have been likewise sifted as wheat, experienced these assaults of Satan, and have learned their own inconsistencies by many and bitter trials. If so, it is not charitable that you should withhold from others the benefit of your own experience: pity those that are weak in faith, and those that are young in the Christian life; warn them of the power of their own corruptions, which they have not yet duly estimated, and the wiles and subtlety of Satan with whom they have to contend, and the power of that ensnaring world, in the midst of which they live: teach them by your own fall, what they must expect, and by your own rescue, what they may have from Christ: give them the benefit of your personal doubts, and fears, and agitations, and conflicts, and your prayers and successes: let them find that Christ in you is able to save the weak, and that the believer is weak alone, and that his own strength only is in his Saviour: and that thus, many who are ready to rush into evils, from want of experience, may be by you guided, and that the blessing bestowed on you, may be communicated to them. What a pleasing state, when those who have experienced most of Satan's power, and the power of Christ, are thus like parents watching over their children, and guiding those inexperienced and weak to a better condition; imitating therein the very grace and mercy of the Lord, who is occupied daily in gathering the lambs into his bosom, and gently leading them along the rugged wilderness of life, to that garden of delight and glory, where all his people shall lie down for ever in the richest pastures, and beside the purest waters, and where they will no more sorrow, because there will be no more sin.



## THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

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“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—MATTHEW, vi. 33.

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WHEN a person of distinction in society addresses us, whose rank is sustained by real excellence of character, he is entitled to our attention: his opinions and advice are supposed to be the result of wisdom, experience, and discernment; whilst the position from which he speaks, causes his sentiments and lessons to fall upon the mind with considerable profundity and weight. Hence the importance which is attached to the writings of the Apostles and Prophets, the reference which is frequently made to the opinions of the pious fathers of the church, and to those Christian sages and philosophers who were taught by the Spirit of God, and whose instructions, and whose sayings, are to be revered by every pious and Christian mind.

Now, my young friends, let us apply this remark to the subject before us: and oh, what a Teacher addresses us this evening in the language of the text! In point of dignity and elevation, he is “higher than the kings of the earth;” in point of wisdom and excellence, he is “the only wise God, our Saviour,” to whom “every knee shall bow.” In regard to his grace and love, never man spake like that man, with so much fidelity and condescension, with so much affection and fervour; and for the weight and importance of his instructions, they are really “like apples of gold, in a frame-work of silver.”

This Teacher is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ,” in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” For the best interests of the young, he was tenderly concerned; aware of the many snares to which they were exposed, and the peculiar adaptation of his Gospel to promote their safety and happiness, never has he remitted, never for one instant resigned that merciful regard which he was pleased to display whilst here upon earth. He still pities you, he still addresses you from his high throne of glory; oh, listen to his voice while he says, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” And let the injunction of the Most High, as it issues forth from the excellent glory, have its weight upon your mind—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.”

Placing ourselves, then, in the attitude of hearing at the feet of this great and kind Teacher, let us endeavour to notice, first, the objects which he here presses upon our attention—“the kingdom of God and his righteousness:” secondly, the priority of their claim—“seek first:” and thirdly, the particulars of the promise—“and all these things shall be added unto you.”

First, THE OBJECTS WHICH ARE PRESENTED TO OUR ATTENTION—"the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

My young friends, these are valuable considerations, these are noble points of attraction; compared with which every other is inferior and valueless. You are invited to seek a *kingdom*—not a mere province, not a limited territory; and a kingdom which cannot be lost either by fraud, or usurpation, or conquest, or the inroads of death; never can be moved by persecution, by artifice, by the vicissitudes of time, or by decay. What in the estimation of human pride is deemed of so vast amount as this? You recollect, my young friends, what exertions have been made, what sacrifices have been endured, what rivers of blood have been shed, what sums of money have been expended, what dangers have been encountered, to gain a kingdom, a throne, a sceptre, a mere tract of land. And yet what are earthly acquisitions, however splendid and costly, when compared to these that are announced in the text? They at best are only the kingdoms of *men*, this is called "the kingdom of *God*." They are constantly liable to change and fluctuation; and you know well how they pass from hand to hand, from possessor to possessor: whilst this is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" it cannot be changed, it must remain. These earthly kingdoms can never secure to those that enjoy them, tranquillity and happiness, but are the constant sources of anxiety and care; whereas this is sure to impart to you peace, and safety, and holiness, and blessedness.

Who then can wonder at the frequent invitations, at the pressing solicitude of Christian parents and Christian ministers, for the welfare of those who as yet do not seem to inherit such a kingdom? Who can be surprised at the earnestness of mind, the strength of affection, the fearless decision, the unbending integrity, nay, the bitter sufferings and martyrdom of the saints in all ages, rather than give up such an acquisition as this? They hear the voice, they know the propriety of the injunction, of Him who says, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown;" and sooner than lose that they would lose their lives.

And what is this kingdom? It is the power of religion in the heart, the dominion of Christ in the world, and the realms of glory in heaven hereafter.

By the *power of religion in the heart*, we briefly mean, that peaceful and holy influence which the blessed Spirit of God possesses and exerts within, when the enmity of the carnal mind is subdued, when the love of the world and of sin is translated into the love of holiness, and when the powers of the soul are brought into implicit subjection to the sceptre, the law, and the authority of Jesus Christ; "for he must reign till all his enemies become his footstool." Then we experimentally understand what that Scripture means which says, "the kingdom of God is within." It is, in fact, the heart, long usurped by the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience, given up, surrendered, consecrated to the Great Redeemer, that he may come and take up his abode there, and sway his sceptre over every faculty and power of mind, "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The expression includes *the kingdom of Christ in the world*. To establish this our blessed Saviour came down from heaven, assumed our nature, laid a broad and durable basis (which he compared to a rock for its adhesion, strength, and perpetuity)—died upon the cross for the redemption of men, rose from the

dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right-hand of God, "gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers;" that that kingdom being thus founded might be carried on till at last it was consummated in glory.

Of this kingdom in the world, as you well know, Christ is the sovereign (for he is King of Zion), believers are the subjects, this inspired volume is its code of laws, and the blessings of the Gospel are its privileges. For the promotion of this kingdom in the world, we are taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" and to extend it from the east to the west, from the north to the south, is the great design of the preaching of the Word, of Bible societies, of missionary societies, tract societies, educational societies, and other schemes of benevolence.

Now, the consummation of this internal kingdom of grace in the heart, and the external and spiritual kingdom of Christ in the world, is, *the glory which is afterwards to be revealed*: or, in other words, the kingdom of heaven. This is the final point towards which the conversion of sinners, the increase of our churches, the private and public exertions of Christians, and the multiplication of useful machinery, are tending. Nothing less than that glory will satisfy the goodness and grace of God to bestow upon his people who are here in the wilderness. This is the purchase of the Saviour's blood: and, although, my young friends, you will find that it is through much tribulation you are to enter that kingdom, yet we say to you, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And "as grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life," your faithful Redeemer will not leave you nor forsake you: an abundant entrance shall be ministered to **you** at the last day into the everlasting kingdom of your God and Saviour; when he will say from his throne, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Now, my young friends, allow me to ask you, Is not this an object worthy of your highest, your first attention? Is it not infinitely worthy of your constant anxiety and fervent prayers? Does not the world, after such a glistening prospect as this, appear dim, and insipid, and vapid? Do not its riches and its honours, and its pleasures, and its smiles, shrink into insignificance when put into competition with such an attainment as this? Yes; the world resembles a lamp flickering in the socket amidst the full blaze of a summer's sun. That lamp may be valued in the midnight of winter, when we want such assistance; but when we have the sunshine we put it aside; or, as we sometimes sing—

"As at the light of op'ning day,  
The stars are all concealed;  
So earthly pleasures fade away,  
When Jesus is revealed."

But this is not all; this is not the extent of the revelation of God which we have to propose for your consideration to-night. The Lord gives liberally, and he upbraids not. Hence the command, "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full: hitherto ye have asked nothing." In addition to "the kingdom of God," here is "his righteousness" spoken of: and these must always go together. We wish you particularly to recollect that the one is the title to the other, the

source of the other, the preparation for enjoying the other. There can be no reign of religion in the heart, there can be no admission into the privileges and immunities of the real kingdom and church of Christ in the world, much less a participation of "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" in heaven, till you are partakers of the Lord's righteousness: for "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people."

And what does this mean? It is simply the justifying righteousness of the Son of God and the sanctifying righteousness of the Spirit of God. You are perhaps aware that all that our Redeemer did and suffered here on earth was designed for the benefit of his church and people, for all them that love him, believe in him, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart. His merits are charged to our account, (thus it is called "imputed righteousness,") just as if we had performed them in our own persons. He did the work of obedience and suffering in our nature, in our name, for our benefit, in our room, on our behalf; consequently he became a substitute and a representative; and he is therefore called "The Lord our Righteousness," being "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." As the Blessed God, therefore, has "made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," we can adopt the language of the prophet and say, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

This is the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ which, when received by faith, acquits us at once from condemnation, and imparts "the peace which passeth all understanding." Now, my young friends, is not this worth seeking?

Then intimately connected with this, as a privilege which increases your security from condemnation, is the implanted and imputed righteousness of the Holy Spirit—that is, personal holiness, or sanctification. This is your preparation for heaven, your meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. To this our Lord refers when he says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness;" that is to say, that are now above all things so anxious to be a pious people, that nothing would gratify them so much as to be "Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile." And when this sanctification of the Spirit is happily enjoyed, our spiritual honours, our Christian privileges are duly appreciated: we then appear as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;" and we "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Here then, my dear young friends, are the objects presented to your attention, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Think of them, pray over them, never forget them: and we are happy to tell you that if you seek them in that spirit you will not seek in vain. Cry, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour which thou bearest to thy people." Pray with the Apostle, "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Secondly. WHEN ARE THESE CLAIMS TO BE ATTENDED TO? *Immediately—without delay—first:* "Seek first the kingdom of God." The expression includes the period of life at which you are exhorted to attend to the great concerns of religion, as well as the manner in which that period is to be improved.



The Lord justly claims *priority of attention*; and thus arresting you while young, he expects that you will serve him before you serve yourselves. This I take to be the literal meaning of "seeking first."

This may be urged from the relation he bears to you. Is he not your Creator, your Friend, your Benefactor, your Saviour? What was the great object he had in view in your creation? "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever." The season of youth is peculiarly suited to such a pursuit as this. You well know that the powers of your mind are now in active exercise; your imagination is lively; the conscience is tender—you have not trifled with it as perhaps you will lament you have done should you be spared twenty years longer, and remain irreligious; your affections are warm and lively; and your memories are peculiarly retentive. I have often thought of poor old Barzillai: when King David invited him to come and live with him, the poor old man said, "No—it is kind in you as a king, and benevolent; but I am too old: can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" Such is the difference between youth and old age. But *your* powers, I say again, are all lively and active; and ought I not to say, then, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." You are less engrossed now than you will be when you get further forward in some of the subsequent stages of life.

Your welfare, too, is immensely involved in this. You will find—(and now we speak to you from what we have seen, and known, and felt; we can speak to you from the heart to the heart)—you will find religion to be the best preservative against temptation. Nothing so much secures the citadel of the heart as the fear and love of God. Look at Joseph: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Nothing will lay so good a foundation for a long, prosperous, and happy life as this. "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days?" is the proposition of the Psalmist. And the answer is, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." In other words, attend to the great business of religion, and you will find that it has "the promise of the life that now is," as well as "that which is to come."

Another thing worthy of your attention is, that if you begin thus with God and the great concerns of the soul, you will find that it will prevent the lamentable accumulation of guilt, which by and by will stare you in the face like mountains for altitude, and like the sand on the sea shore for multitude. That is a fearful passage, and I wish my young friends would recollect it if they are determined to turn a deaf ear to the voice of instruction—"Treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath;" increasing the treasury of wrath, adding one portion to the bitter cup after another, of which they will have to partake (if grace and repentance interfere not) through the countless ages of eternity. Now religion will preserve you from this. And possibly the previous part of your life is the only latitude it shall please God to give you in which to attend to these pursuits. You have no right to calculate on the future—you know not that you shall live to be old; life is very uncertain; young people die as well as the aged. What is that which I see coming out from the city of Nain? It is a funeral procession. Let us draw near and look at its attendants. Just behind the bier I see an aged widow (she was a mother) and many neighbours and friends are attending. But who is the corpse? "*A young man* carried out, the only son of his mother,

and she was a widow." There you see a monument illustrative of the position I have now taken: there you see that young people die as well as the more advanced in years. Is it not then indispensable that you "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness?"

But it not only includes priority of attention—it implies also *priority of time*: for it is very possible a young person may think of seeking "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" after the present period, before the season of youth is finally departed, but after he has attended to other matters first of all; and therefore the Lord is to have the refuse. How different is this to the conduct and character of Solomon: while he was yet young, "the Lord appeared to him in a dream by night, and said, Ask what I shall give thee." And Solomon said, "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." That was his first desire, that he might have that saving wisdom which would secure his peace and comfort. "And God said unto him, because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." This fully justifies the sentiment in the text—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Let his glory be secured, and your spiritual and everlasting interest, and all other requisite things, will follow. Every interest must give way to this. Look at the two sisters, Mary and Martha; Martha "cumbered" (like many of you, I fear) "about much serving"—about what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. But look at Mary, attending to the "one thing needful," choosing "the good part that shall not be taken away from her." My female friends, do you observe Mary's character; and seek the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to enable you to adopt her example.

This leads us to notice—

Thirdly, **THE PROMISE INCLUDED IN THE TEXT**, "And all these things shall be added unto you."

This implies that your primary pursuit, seeking "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" shall not be vain—all secondary bestowments will be sure to follow. Here, then, my young friends, you find one very high privilege grounded upon a very sure footing. You will not seek, your Saviour assures you, in vain. If you are really in earnest, if you are convinced of the necessity of an interest in redeeming grace and dying love, your seeking will succeed. The corruptions of your flesh shall not hinder you; the allurements of the world shall not hinder you; the power and malice of Satan shall not hinder you; the persecutions of ungodly relatives shall not hinder you.

Let us refer your attention to another example: "And in every work that he (Hezekiah) began in the service of the house of God, and in the Law, and in the commandments, to seek his God; he did it with all his heart and prospered." A fine text for you, my young friends, to begin the year with, as a theme for the first week's meditation: whatever he did in the service of God, he did it with all his heart. Oh that you may seek these objects of attention and attraction

in the way he did, and prosper: for "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies be at peace with him."

"And all these things shall be added unto you:" that is to say, all necessary things—whatever shall conduce for your benefit and the glory of Almighty God. We argue from this principle, that there is that in the very spirit and design of religion which is calculated to promote your temporal prosperity. You know how it will guard you against the snares, the delusions, the temptations, and the dangers of life; and you know the expensiveness of such pursuits as these. You also know that religion, whilst it guards against a course of profligacy, will teach us to be careful. But above all, the blessing of God Almighty will be on us; and when that comes all will be well; for "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." And how cheering and comforting is the influence of personal religion. You have seen a fine development of that, in the beautiful language of Solomon, which we read at the commencement of the service. Personifying religion in the female character, he says, "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Besides, there are many promises of the divine word that follow up the declaration of the text: as for instance, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

We therefore argue, that if giving, from evangelical motives, merely those disbursements which the cause of religion and the cause of charity demand, honouring the Lord with thy substance—if this will have a tendency (not meritoriously, but under the divine blessing) to do us good; what will be the consequence of the dedication, not of the substance, but the consecration of the heart? "Him that honoureth me," says God, "I will honour." And how can we do this so well, as when we yield first of all to him the dew of our youth, consecrating our powers to him while we are yet young? There is a passage in Leviticus which informs us, that the people of old were required once in seven years to let the land rest; they were neither to till nor sow—consequently there was to be no harvest. And the Lord foreseeing the objection that some might make as to the result of this suspension of agricultural pursuits, said, that the good year shall not only give abundance that should be sufficient, but that the land should yield enough in the sixth year for three years to come. In this manner you see the Lord blesses us with the abundance of his providence as well as of his grace. Then, "fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

My dear young friends, in conclusion, what shall we say to these things? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Now what attention ought we to pay to such intelligence, to such an exhortation as that contained in the text? If I could inform either of you of a certain spot, where by digging you would find concealed treasure; if I had authority to tell either of you, I had discovered a document in which your name appeared—that that document was none other

than your title to a valuable estate—I can easily imagine what attention would be paid to such an announcement. But I am telling you of a greater estate than this—the kingdom of religion in the heart, the kingdom of the Gospel in the world, and the kingdom of glory in the heavens—blended in this threefold character with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and that of the Holy Spirit. Now of these we entreat you to think. Remember the person and authority of the Speaker, the contents of the message, and the privilege you enjoy in being allowed to seek these things. He has not said unto you, “Depart; you have given your heart to the Lord—I accept it not.” No. Receive then this message with thankfulness, with prayer, and I hope with compliance.

And what attention *has been* paid to it? Some here have *welcomed* it: they have asked, and have received; they have sought and they have found: they are now walking in the good and right way that leads to eternal life. Of such young persons we saw a few with us this morning for the first time at the Lord’s table. I congratulate you, my young friends, who have thus decided. Do you repent it? No; you have reason to bless the day in which you first heard the word to profit. Just see on what high ground you stand. Look at your unbounded prospects that stretch beyond the grave. Remember, the time is coming, when in the article of death you shall cry, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” And in the prospect of entering the world of spirits, you will add, “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

Some are *beginning* to seek this kingdom: and we welcome you also. There must be a beginning in the Christian course, as in other pursuits. Now then, put your hand to the plough: from this very day, the commencement of the year, go forward in humble dependance on the teachings and leadings of the Holy Spirit of God.

Others, though they have not advanced so far as to appear in the act of seeking, yet, if I am not greatly mistaken, there are convictions on their minds; there are desires; there is an uneasiness: they cannot go on as they have done. Nothing would please them so well as to have the witness in their heart, that they had a change of heart, and were adopted into the family of God. Do you then, my young friends, seek also; seek this kingdom on the pages of inspiration; seek it in the Gospel of God’s dear Son; seek it in prayer; seek it in the way of his appointment.

Are there any young persons, who, after all, are desperate enough to brave “the terrors of the Lord,” and to neglect those things which belong to their peace—who, in fact, say, We will not seek it? Then, sirs, you will take the consequences. But still, if you pity not yourselves we pity you; if you will not weep for yourselves we will weep for you; if you will not pray for yourselves we will pray for you. And we hope to see the day, when all your enmity, and blindness, and darkness will be chased away; and when you shall hear, and assent to, and comply with His directions who says, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.”

May God give his blessing; and to his name be the praise for ever and ever. Amen.



## THE GOSPEL A WITNESS.

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CAMDEN CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, JULY 20, 1834.

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“ And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”—MATTHEW, xxiv. 14.

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THERE is great difficulty in deciding what parts of this prophetic chapter have their fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, and what expect their accomplishment in the yet future advent of Christ. It were beyond our purpose to attempt any general examination of this matter. We doubt not, indeed, that as the Apostles proposed three distinct questions to Christ, three distinct answers are to be traced in the chapter. The questions are, When shall these things be? What shall be the sign of their coming;—and of the end of the world? The first question, we may suppose, referred exclusively to the overthrow of the Jewish temple and polity; the second and third glanced forward to mightier catastrophes, those associated with the consummation of all things. If we could determine precisely, where the answer to one question concluded, and at which another commenced, the interpretation of the whole prophecy would be greatly facilitated. There is here little or no break in the chapter; the discourse is continuous; and therefore, though we may resolve it into divisions corresponding with the questions, there must be more of conjecture than certainty in the separation of its several parts. But if the several replies could be accurately distinguished, we should perhaps find, that much which is appropriated to one event, could not, without violence, be wholly detached from the others. If we should find, for example, that Christ's discourse up to the twenty-ninth verse, was in answer to the question which had to do with the destruction of Jerusalem, it would be difficult to believe that it contained no reference whatsoever to the subsequent questions.

In conformity with the general character of prophecy, if there be a typical relation between two events, we expect, that what in a restricted sense sketches the first will, in a more extended, delineate the second. There are many predictions which have found fulfilment in certain past occurrences, but it would startle us by the exaggeration of its figures if we did not believe they have yet to receive an accomplishment. There is, for example, no sublimer passage in the Bible, than the conclusion of the sixth chapter of the book of the Revelations: the opening of the sixth seal is followed by a great earthquake; the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon as blood, the stars of heaven then fall to the earth; the heavens depart as a scroll when it is rolled together; “ And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondsman, and

every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Now if we would preserve consistency of interpretation in expounding the book of Revelations, we are obliged to refer this overpowering description to events which scarcely answer to the awfulness of its imagery—that mighty revolution of which the Roman world was the theatre when Christianity was adopted as the religion of the state. This is the event which in all probability occurred at the opening of the sixth mystic seal: but whilst fully sensible of the greatness of this event, and of the vast change which was consequent on the overthrow of heathenism, we are sure that the mind cannot be otherwise than dissatisfied if forbidden to apply the verse to yet future occurrences. Now so natural and so necessary does such application appear, that we are accustomed to introduce into the sketches of the last judgment, as though that scene had undoubtedly been present to St. John, the fearful appeal to the mountains and the rocks which is made by all ranks of the disobedient. We never hesitate in considering this passionate invitation as proceeding from transgressors, conscious that there is no escape from the wrath of the Lamb; and we should feel as though the imagery were too tremendous, if nothing were described but the fierce destruction which accompanied the overthrow and downfall of paganism. And we suppose that inasmuch as revolutions affecting the great mass of mankind are necessarily typical of the final judgment, with its accompanying results, prophetic descriptions were designedly so constructed as always to carry forward our thoughts to the scene in which we have the closest possible interest.

It is thus with the chapter before us: the destruction of Jerusalem, the vengeance which overtook the enemies of Christ, the deliverance vouchsafed to his followers—in these there is a most accurate delineation of all which shall occur at the end of the world. We may, therefore, fairly expect, that statements which had a primary reference to judgments on the Jews, will find a secondary accomplishment in transactions, which concern intimately the whole of our race. So that if we could so succeed in dividing the chapter before us, as to apportion with certainty the reply to each question, we should still consider that the verse which could thus be associated with the overthrow and dispersion of the once favoured people of God, contains allusions to yet future events—the condemnation of the impenitent, and the rescue of the faithful.

The verse with which we would especially engage your attention, is certainly susceptible of this double interpretation. Our Lord is giving signs by which men might determine the near approach of the end. There would be wars, he says, and rumours of wars; a convulsion and commotion which might induce the expectation that the great and last change was at hand. He informs his hearers, however, that these would be only the beginning of sorrows; and then tells them, that the end could not come until this Gospel of the kingdom had been preached in all the world. Now it is unquestionable, that prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel had been widely proclaimed throughout the then known world. St. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, speaks of the "truth of the Gospel which is come unto you as it is in all the world:" and again, in the same chapter he mentions, this Gospel is preached "to every creature which is under heaven." And it is a wonderful, but quite incontrovertible truth, that in less than thirty years after the crucifixion of Christ, which was

before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christian Church was planted in almost every district of the earth as known to the Romans; so that the propagation of Christianity was co-extensive with the discoveries of geography. And hence the sign of the approaching end (if you consider as the end the overthrow of the Jews), the sign of that end was distinctly exhibited ere vengeance came down on the infidel nation. But the moment you regard the destruction of Jerusalem as figurative of a yet sterner catastrophe, you will consider, that the terms "all the world," and "all nations," must be understood in the most unrestricted sense, and that the prophecy, therefore, announces the universal proclamation of the Gospel, as preparatory to that period which shall be emphatically "the end."

Viewed in this light, and with this extension, the passage is one of the most interesting and important in the New Testament. The end of the present dispensation, that season of wonders and terrors, at which Christ is to re-appear to adjust the affairs of our disorganised creation; this is to be heralded by so general a preaching of Christianity, that there shall not be a tribe which has not heard the message of redemption. But then it deserves your closest attention, that our text says nothing of *general conversion*, and gives no hint that the message would be *believed* as well as *heard*. The assertion is simply, that this Gospel of the kingdom shall be "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations;" and, as we shall perceive more clearly in the sequel, whether accepted or rejected, the Gospel becomes a witness unto all who hear it proclaimed; whilst undoubtedly the phrase, that it "shall be preached for a *witness*," conveys the idea of rejection rather than acceptance. Thus it was antecedent to the destruction of Jerusalem: the Apostles and first teachers went the round of the world, publishing the Gospel to every nation, and every people; but nothing at all approaching to a general conversion resulted from their labours: what they preached was for a witness. But whatever the sense which you attach to this expression, it is certain, it refers not to the acceptance of the message; for on such supposition Jerusalem would not yet be overthrown, a fixed sign of "the end" having still to be exhibited.

In like manner when we regard as the end, Christ's coming to judge, we are to expect as the precursor of this end, the universal publication, but not the universal reception, of Christianity. The Gospel is to be preached everywhere for a witness; but this differs widely from its being everywhere believed in to the saving of the soul. And it is the fulfilment of this prophecy, thus literally interpreted, which we consider now in the act of being effected through the labours of institutions, which give a glory to our age. We have often told you, that we look not unto this present dispensation, and through the working of present means, for the world being overspread with genuine Christianity. There are many passages of Scripture, which, like the text under review, consist not, so far as we can judge, with the idea of a general conversion of the nations, previous to the second coming of Christ. And yet, at one time or another, Christianity will be universally received; for it is on this noble consummation that prophecy pours its most animated strains. But if, up to the time of the end, the Gospel is to be received only for a witness, it seems evident, that what is defined as "the end," must precede, and not follow, the unlimited diffusion of the religion of Jesus. We are at a loss to discover how scriptural statements which represent Christ's coming, as preceded by only a partial reception of the

Gospel, can be reconciled with the opinion of numbers, that this coming is to follow a millenium; a season, that is, during which the Gospel shall be universally received, and when, according to the language of our text, the universal publication, but not the universal reception, of Christianity, is regarded as a sign which shall usher in the end. Then it is, we say, that notwithstanding the small measure of actual success, institutions for disseminating truth, fill nobly a place in the accomplishment of prophecy. Support may have been given to these institutions on a supposition, which will not bear, we think, the test of rigid inquiry—a supposition that God would use them as his instruments in eradicating falsehood from the whole of this creation. Those who have considered, that Christianity is to advance to unbounded dominion, without fresh interference on the part of its Founder, and that the moral condition of our globe is to be gradually ameliorated, until, independent of any new manifestation of Christ, the lion shall lie down with the lamb—such persons, we say, may naturally have regarded Bible and Missionary Societies, as engines through which shall be accomplished the result, that all shall know God from the least to the greatest: but if it be as a consequence on the coming of Christ that idolatry is to be abolished, and every falsehood extirpated, the Redeemer himself appearing, according to the description in the Apocalypse, to “destroy them which destroyed the earth;” it must follow, that to entertain the opinion just mentioned, is to substitute the powers of our societies for that visible making bare of the arm of the Omnipotent, which prophecy associates with the Redeemer’s second advent. Yet, in holding that Bible and Missionary Societies are not to regenerate the world, we also hold, that they have a part the most splendid and important to perform; they seem to us as instruments for the accomplishment of that which, ere Jerusalem fell, was accomplished by Apostles and apostolic men—the preaching of the Gospel for a witness to all nations. “The end” cannot come, and, therefore, the glorious and palmy days of Christianity cannot be introduced, until, if there be truth in prophecy, the message of redemption hath been proclaimed in every district of the habitable globe. It is not, then, that our societies are engines for accomplishing the predictions which assert the universal diffusion of Christianity, but they certainly are engines for accomplishing those predictions which define what must happen ere this universal diffusion takes place: they are instruments for effecting what must be preliminary to the millenium, though they will not in any sense produce that millenium. And whenever we hear of a fresh incursion into the territories of heathenism, of a translation of the Bible into a language which has never before expressed the mysteries of redemption, or the labours of the missionary who has planted himself among tribes heretofore shut out from the advantages of revelation—then we can rejoice, not from supposing that a step has been taken in this course; we hail the event as marking the approach, though not itself a component part, of that mighty renovation which is to pervade this globe in all its circumference; and we feel (and is this no cause of exultation?) that with greater and greater distinctness is that sign being exhibited which must be displayed in its fulness ere the millenium can dawn, the sign announced in our text, that “this Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness,” and that then it is that “the end shall come.”

But we wish to pass from these general considerations, to others of a more personal and more practical nature. We consider it as evidently the represen-



tation of our text, that there are ends to be answered by the publication of the Gospel, over and above the gathering in of a remnant from the mass of human kind. There is no hint given, as we have already observed, that many, or even one, would be converted; the statement is simply that the Gospel is to be *preached* for a witness. It may indeed commonly happen, that when efforts are made to Christianize a territory, the endeavour is attended with some measure of success. The translation of the Bible into a new language, or the planting of a missionary station in some unexplored wild, is generally, perhaps, productive of benefit to many individuals; but it cannot be the fact of a few detached cases of conversion which accomplishes the prediction, that the Gospel shall be a witness to a nation. On such a supposition the prophecy would be unfulfilled, so long as a single people were universally infidel; whereas we think it clear, from the tenor of our text, that the witness is given by the mere act of preaching: so that if in going through the Roman empire, the Apostles had not a solitary convert, the sign of its approaching end would still have been furnished by their publication, however fruitless, of the Gospel. And now, if all our labours to evangelize the heathen win not over a single idolater, our disregarded Bibles, and our persecuted missionaries, would serve to give the heraldry which is to announce the second advent.

But when we have settled that there must be a witness in the mere act of preaching, we are bound to search carefully into the nature of this witness, in order that we may understand the responsibility laid on all who ever hear the Gospel, and the ends which are answered by its publication. We may lay it down as a fundamental principle, that God does nothing in vain; and that, whatever the appearance, whether in the moral or the physical world, there is no waste in any of its providential arrangements. It may seem to us, at first sight, useless, that the Gospel should be preached where certain to be rejected; and we may be inclined to regard it as a waste of the precious seed of the word, that much of it should be scattered on the rock, or on the sand: but when we find that the preaching of the Gospel serves as a witness to nations, who put away from them the proffer of forgiveness, we learn immediately that the purposes of God's providence are carried on by the publication of Christianity to those who reject it, as well as those who embrace it; so that the moral government of the Creator requires that the seed be cast on the rock where it cannot take root, as well as on the good soil which will recompense the husbandman: and it is upon this truth that we now desire to fasten your attention. We wish to inquire into the accuracy of the assertion, that the Gospel is a witness when rejected by its hearers. The inquiry is one, with which we all have the closest concern; for we have all heard the Gospel, and therefore, in all of us, some ends of its publication must be answered. We shall employ the remainder of our time, then, in examining, practically and simply, what it is to which the Gospel bears witness now, and what it is to which the Gospel shall bear witness hereafter. When we have ascertained the truth on each of those points, we shall readily understand the necessity that the Gospel be preached in the face of a certain rejection.

Now you are sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the Gospel, to regard it as an authoritative announcement of all that is benevolent, and all that is awful in Deity. We would not imply, that where this Gospel has not been proclaimed, there is any want of witness for God. The visible course and con-

stitution of nature, the moral law written in our hearts, the relics and traditions of religion which, however worn and mutilated, present everywhere simply the same original truth—these bear a testimony which it is not easy to overlook, and which shall undoubtedly condemn those who change the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like unto corruptible man. But whatever is attested by these, is announced with increased force by the Gospel; whilst joyful and overwhelming tidings are added, which could never be obtained from any source but a distinct revelation. Let the Gospel be published to a people, and over and above the observation of all that is taught by natural religion, there is intelligence of the divine interference on the behalf of human kind, which meets our necessities, but altogether surpasses our discoveries.

There has been long a witness to this people of the being of a God; so that however removed from other nations, and denied the advantages of revelation, they have read in the scenery of their land, and in the pleadings of conscience that will not be repressed, the truth of the overruling power of a Judge, who takes cognizance of actions: but there has been nothing to direct them to right views of the relative position of the Creator and the creature; and even if they had struggled free from many of the trammels of superstition, there would be so confused an apprehension of the methods of obtaining God's favour, that life might be spent in conjecture, and death shrunk from with dread and abhorrence. We send them Bibles and missionaries, and there is wrought immediately a vast change in their moral condition. We have no measurement by which to define the difference in the circumstances of the nation which has heard, and the nation which has not heard the Gospel. We are not referring to the broad separation which marks off the Christian territory from the heathen. The Gospel may be received or the Gospel may be rejected; this affects not the truth we desire to enforce: it is the fact that there has gone through the land an authoritative proclamation in the name of the Living God, declaratory of vengeance to the upholders of the continued rebellion, and of the willingness of the Almighty to extend pardon to all who believe on his Son: and it is this fact which puts this land into a new moral position; so that whatever the reception which the inhabitants give to the message, they have crossed the demarcation line between willing and unavoidable ignorance, and must be judged by the laws of the Gospel dispensation. It is quite optional with them whether or not they will embrace Christianity; but it is in no sense optional whether or no there shall be any difference in their circumstances as heathens. They may keep their idols, they may continue to worship God with the degraded rites of ancestral superstition, but they cannot restore themselves to the position of those who never heard the tidings of redemption; and, therefore, they must be classed at the judgment with those who have had salvation within their reach. And thus the Bible and the missionary work an imperishable and incalculable alteration in the condition of every land where the Gospel is announced: for however the citizens of this land may remain where they were on all human calculation, they have a new place marked out for them on the platform of judgment: so that when the generations of mankind shall be put upon trial, they must stand with those who have despised Christianity, and not with those who were left in their paganism. And all this arises mainly from the fact, that the Gospel is a witness on all those points which men have most interest in ascertaining, and that

it commends itself to the conscience as a revelation of God's will, and as a witness that, whatever the sublime and awful attributes with which imagination may have invested the Deity, there has been no overpassing the strict matter of fact, but that God is unspeakably more exalted than even mountains and stars seem to announce him, and immeasurably more tremendous than the worst fears of nature have supposed him.

Revealed religion, as we have already observed, is in many respects a republication of natural; so that the voice which issues from every spot in the visible creation, and which speaks within us in many a moment of solitude, and during many an act of transgression, finds its echo, only broader and deeper, in the announcements of Christ; and thus the Gospel witnesses to all which has been suggested by nature and by conscience. And it witnesses of things which at best are only dimly conjectured without its assistance: it is a witness to the soul's immortality; it is a witness of the body's resurrection; it is a witness of man's fallen estate, and his absolute incapacity of regaining God's favour; the gracious and abundant provision divinely made for his forgiveness; the deserved wretchedness which is to be avoided, and the unmerited bliss which may be attained: the whole witnessing of momentous and magnificent truths. It is not an uncertain and unaccredited witness; but ever carries with it its credentials in all its marchings over the face of the globe. The missionary may have no power of confirming the doctrines he preaches by the miracles which he works; neither does the inspired volume weave about itself an atmosphere of prodigy, and thus cause itself to be everywhere attended with sensible evidence: but, as we have often told you, there is such a correspondence between the Bible and the conscience, the announcements of Christianity so adapt themselves to the circumstances of humanity, that Christianity never can be honestly rejected, because not accompanied with sufficient credentials. We enter not afresh on the arguments on this point which we have frequently and laboriously handled; but this much we will say, that there is nothing in the aspect of the Bible which can justify us in rejecting it without examining it; and that the scheme of Christianity so manifestly meets the exigences of our condition, that we can have no right to throw it aside as though a glance sufficed to prove it an imposition. And this circumstance it is which renders inexcusable the infidelity whether of nations or of individuals. The nation or the individual seeks external evidence, and the missionary is unable to give external evidence; but what he announces so tallies with all the suggestions of conscience, that he has a right to expect the proof he has to give will be carefully examined; and if he secure this, he may be said to have secured the reception of his statements. There is enough in the Gospel, even of external evidence, to demand and fix the attention of its hearers. It would be monstrous to say that the Gospel carries with it its own contradiction; and unless it do this (though it does altogether the reverse, for it commends itself to the conscience, and presents itself for the adoption of all human kind)—unless it actually carry with it its own contradiction, it has a right to ask that we examine it with all possible carefulness: for where so much is at issue, where, on the alternative of reception or rejection, may just hang another alternative, that of everlasting misery or everlasting happiness, it cannot be the part of a rational being to be content with any thing but certainty: nay, sirs, *the mere possibility* that the Gospel may be true, binds you to act as though you had ascertained it



to be true; for while there is the least chance that the future may verify its threatenings, it is common prudence that the present see us obeying its commands. And thus the Gospel, preached in its simplicity, without any of the accompaniments of miracle or sign, has an incontrovertible claim on the attention of men. The missionary may demand that judgment may be suspended till proofs have been examined; and if he once bring his audience to this (and this consideration you observe we cannot refuse without incurring the guilt of wilful infidelity), then he can ply them with evidences which are as convincing as the miracle and the prodigy: he can give them as overpowering a demonstration, as though there were superhuman prowess in his arm or his word; so that he brings them into the position of those to whom the Gospel comes with the overwhelming attestation of its truth, and to whom therefore it shall not be an apology for unbelief that the sick were not healed in their streets, and the storm not hushed on their waters.

We return, then, to our statement, that the Gospel is no unaccredited witness of those exalted truths which are contained in its announcements. It comes to a land with such appearance of authority as requires him to yield an attentive examination, and with such material of evidence as must make the examination, if honestly conducted, issue in conviction. And thus indeed it is a witness, not indeed so apparelled as to compel the attention, but most admirably adapted to solicit that attention, and when obtained, to satisfy and persuade. A testimony, therefore, is given by the mere preaching of the Gospel to a nation upon those great matters with which, as immortal creatures, we have the closest possible concern. And when the missionary has set foot in a province of heathenism, and gathered around him the children of idolatry, and delivers the unadorned message of the Bible, while his preaching is a witness for God and for truth, while his preaching is a witness to the destructiveness of sin—a witness to the necessity for mediatorial interference—a witness to the person and office of the Spirit—a witness of the sufficiency of the atonement—a witness to the most glorious and overpowering of truths, that the silence of eternity has been broken, that God has come forth from his sublime and unapproachable solitude, and that manifesting himself not as a wrathful avenger, crushing the world for its iniquities, but as a compassionate Father, reconciling the world to himself—he has opened a way by which the most alienated may return, and even the most rebellious may find pardon, and the most wretched reach happiness. So that when Bibles and Missionaries shall have circumnavigated the earth, and visited every division of the human family, it may be said that the Bible and the Missionary has been preaching as a witness for all nations.

We look upon the lowest and most degraded of the tribes of our race, and we feel that, though God has not left himself without a witness, seeing that the tokens of his Providence are everywhere depicted, yet there has not been offered to this rude race that testimony which is best adapted to animate to hope, and stimulate to energy. They can read that God is in the firmament, and on the landscape; but they are not taught by the rich developments of nature how sin may be forgiven; and therefore, if plunged into eternity ere the tidings of redemption have been proclaimed in their hearing, they go unavoidably ignorant of the grand message sent by God to man, and might plead at the judgment-seat that they had never been told, and that it was impossible to discover, through what channel forgiveness should be sought. But, let the preacher



plant himself in the midst of the tribes, and the effect is the same as if there had been a sudden throwing open the heavens, and the long-hidden Creator had divinely revealed himself: and henceforward they must carry with them, in their passing through life, the celestial communication as a guide or as an accuser; and God, as he beholds them from his throne of majesty, or the throne of his judgment, will regard them as beings to whom the witness has been vouchsafed, that he is a forgiving Father to all who believe in Christ, and a consuming fire to all who would justify themselves.

But these remarks somewhat trench on the last division of our subject. We have seen what it is to which the Gospel witnesses now; it remains that we briefly observe to what it is to which the Gospel shall witness hereafter. There is a close connexion between the two points. The preached Gospel is now a witness for God; and it will hereafter be a witness for God. It is now a witness that pardon has been procured; and it will hereafter be a witness that this pardon was offered. It is now a witness that there is salvation through Christ; and it will hereafter witness that men were directed to seek it in none other. There is nothing, in short, to which it now bears witness to which it shall not hereafter bear witness. But the difference of testimony lies in this; the preached Gospel witnesses *now* to warn and direct; it shall witness *hereafter* to accuse and to condemn. We have spoken of the great change in moral condition which the preaching of the Gospel brings necessarily on a people. We have referred this change to their position on the platform of judgment, rather than of that amongst the kingdoms of the world. And it is that witness, the preached Gospel, which shall effect this great change. We can imagine to ourselves the resurrection of idolatrous tribes, whose shores have been visited by the teachings of Christianity, that may arise among the heathen; and that may look to be judged with the heathen, seeing they were never admitted within the pale of a Christian community. But though they had full power of resisting the testimony of the Gospel, they had no power whatever of annihilating that testimony, so that it might never rise up as an accuser against them. And this testimony will press forward: it could not gain entrance into their hearts, and therefore it graved itself on the books out of which the human race shall be judged; and now it declares to the idolatrous tribes, that it was not through want of revelation that they bowed to the stock and the stone; that it was not in unavoidable ignorance that they worshipped false gods, and practised superstitious rites; that it was not because the scheme of Mediatorial interference laid beyond their discovery, that they had endeavoured by vain offerings to propitiate the unknown Creator; but that, privileged to hear of Christ, they had despised him, and instructed as to the divine nature they refused to hearken to the teaching, and entreated to put from them their abominations, they threw ridicule on their advisers, and warned as to future punishments and rewards they lived on in scorn. Oh it will be thus, as the mighty business of judgment goes forward, that the tribes who thought to shelter themselves under heathenism will be arraigned by that very preaching to which they turned a deaf ear; and driven from the excuse of paganism, without having shelter in the privileges of Christianity, stand exposed to the fiercest visitings of that wrath, which shall overwhelm the hosts of the disobedient.

The witness thus given in respect of nations, will be given with equal force in respect of individuals. There is no consideration which ought to be more constantly present to the mind of the preacher than this—that those whom he does not convert, he must hereafter condemn. It is just possible that one motive or another may have drawn here an individual who has been brought up in ignorance of the great truths of Christianity. I now preach the Gospel “for a witness” to this man: I witness to him that sin, original as well as actual, has brought him under condemnation; I witness to him that, in this, his ruined estate, God offers him the aids of his Spirit, and the redemption of his Son; I witness to him that, if he would not make sure to himself an eternity of anguish and remorse, he must rise at once and wrestle with the corruptions of his nature, and close with the gracious offer; I witness to him by the majesties of Deity, and by the sufferings of Calvary, and by a deluged world, and by the deathbeds of saints, and by the wailings of lost spirits, and by the anthems of angels, that everlasting life is placed within his reach, but that, if he refuse to lay hold on the hope set before him, he must go down, as rejected, to the condemned world: and then my part is done, so far as the present state of being is concerned. The man will perhaps go away as indifferent as he came, and we shall never meet again until Christ come to judgment: but I have fastened myself to this man, and time cannot wear away the link, and distance cannot break it, and the earthquakes of the last day cannot dissolve it. I have made myself a witness against this man: I cannot, if I would, keep back this testimony; it has been given already, given within the last minute. The words which you all heard—words which expressed nothing but the simple and well-known truths of the Bible—have sprung forward, and will not be recalled: they have written themselves in God’s book, and oceans cannot expunge them; though (and oh that a tear might be shed) the tear of repentance would instantly obliterate the register. When confronted with this man at the tribunal of the Lamb, and he would plead ignorance of the result (aye, many parents shall there quail before their children), and declare he had not the opportunity of Christian instruction, I shall find myself appealed to, as it were, in the face of the universe; and memory—on which God shall have turned such a resuscitating power, that the events of every day and every minute will come back in their order and freshness—memory will then present this our assembling, and recall this my sermon: and if it be supposable—for we will not be overbold in imagining the stirrings and heavings of thought, when “the great white throne” is erected, and angels line the firmament, and the graves are depopulated—if it be supposable that I may wish I had been silent, that I had never been the means of convicting the man, and bringing down upon him the sentence of banishment, there will presently arise within me a feeling that the office which I hold is now fulfilling itself with terrible acccuracy: I shall forget my own part, whilst surveying the sublime, the awful, and magnificent energies of the word of the Lord; and whilst all around is proclaiming that the end is coming, I shall understand, as I never before understood, the scope and the extent of the prophecy that, ere the end come, this Gospel of the kingdom must be preached for a witness.

Now we think you will have gathered from all these observations, that there

are ends subserved by the preaching of the Gospel to those who reject it as well as to those who receive it. We pretend not to give any account why the universal publication of Christianity must precede the end, though myriads have been allowed to pass into eternity without receiving intimations of redemption. The preaching of the Gospel leaves a nation inexcusable, but it cannot be essential to the purposes of moral government that nations be thus left inexcusable; for on such supposition, every nation, and every age, must have been visited by the pages of revelation. There will, undoubtedly, be a just standard of trial for the heathen as well as for the Christian; and we cannot, therefore, determine, neither would we advance any conjecture, why, as the end approaches, and not at other periods, the Gospel should be preached for a witness to all nations. It is one of the purposes which are subserved by these preachings, but they seem not limited to any one sphere; so that it is beyond us to ascertain why preaching is not extended to every sphere alike. But so far as we ourselves are concerned (and every other question, however interesting, is speculative rather than profitable), it is evident the seed of the Word is not wasted because thrown on a soil where it can take no root. It must be quite obvious that those who are to be judged by the laws of the Gospel dispensation, shall only have themselves to blame if condemned for the rejection of Christ. And to this end an offer must be made them, life and death proposed for their choice. That which now proves ineffectual to the moving them to repentance, is hereafter to vindicate the justice of the condemnation. The seed which, instead of sinking into the heart, is carried away by the fowls of the air, germinates for glory, and will yield a harvest of witness and of final retribution. So that we have no more right to suppose a waste in the spiritual, than in the natural dealings of our Maker. A vast portion of what the husbandman sows yields him no return; but, devoured by the fowls or the insects, is lost to the purposes of human subsistence. But there is no waste in this; the liberal Creator, who feedeth the young ravens that call on him, and careth for the meanest of living things, appoints that in sowing for himself man should minister to the wants of the living creation. In like manner, when preachers scatter the seed of the word, the moral government of the Almighty contemplates other ends besides that of planting in many hearts the germ of immortality. There are attributes of the Creator to be sustained, and higher orders of intelligence to be satisfied: God is to be justified when he speaks, and clear when he judges: and the angels who will throng, as spectators, the last trial of humanity, are to be convinced that every sentence is one of thorough equity. And for all this the preacher sows, in labouring among the nations: he sows the manifestation of the wilfulness of unbelief; he sows the vindication of the justice of punishment; he sows the evidence of the sufficiency of means; he sows what shall produce the concurrence and approval of every rank in the unfallen creation; so that the fearful word "Depart," descends like an eternal malediction on those who are placed at the left hand of the Judge. He sows all this, because the Gospel he preaches is preached for a witness. Oh! it is not lost. That precious seed which, Sabbath after Sabbath, is thrown on the mountain and on the desert, which resists all the diligence of the husbandman—it is not lost. The broad area on which shall be marshalled the stern magnificence of judgment, is white with the harvest; every grain is there yielding its produce; each single particle of Gospel-truth shoots up and waves on that awful field. Preaching for a



witness ! O I speak in feebleness, I cannot throw might into my language ; I cannot breathe words which shall take a lasting form and substance, and fall on the worldly-minded among you ; but they die not : I seem to hear them reverberate from a thousand echoes, louder and louder, deeper and deeper, and swelling the knell which must be rung over lost spirits. Men and brethren, there must be carefulness on both sides ; preaching may witness against the people, and it may witness against the minister. If it be faithful and be rejected, it must witness against the people, and the minister is free from the blood of his hearers. If it be defective as an exhibition of the great truths of the Gospel, it will witness against the minister when he gives account of his stewardship. You may well believe I would earnestly shun being a witness at the last against either you or myself ; and to this end there must be diligence on my part that it be the Gospel which I preach, and a prayerful endeavour on yours to receive with meekness the engrafted word.

We have now reached that season of the year at which I have been accustomed to seek relaxation from the duties of my office, and for that recruiting of my bodily energies which is indispensable to their continued discharge ; and for a few weeks, therefore, we are to be separated. It is a solemn connexion between a minister and his people. I pray God, that whatever in my past ministrations has been agreeable to his word may yet dwell in your memories, and influence your lives ; and that if there has been anything at variance with sound doctrine, he may grant to myself pardon for its utterance, and to you wisdom to detect, and strength to reject, the error ; and if permitted to resume this mine office, he will grant me, I trust, grace to discharge it with increased faithfulness, and bestow upon you, in yet larger measure, the hearing ear, and the teachable spirit. As to the time of my absence (about which, I believe, there is a misunderstanding)—it is not likely to be longer than on former years ; I leave you with the full hope and intention, if such be the will of God, to return to you after just the same interval as on past similar occasions. It is my regret that I have been compelled to labour less frequently among you than I once did, but it is cause of thankfulness to God that I feel no necessity for absenting myself longer than usual from this scene of my labour.

“ And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” These were the words of the Apostle to the elders of Ephesus, and as delivered by the Apostle, they had all the pathos of the words of a dying man ; for he had just said, “ Behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.” I cannot throw the like pathos into my words ; but life is made up of uncertainties, and those who separate, for a few weeks, do well in not reckoning too confidently on meeting again in the flesh. Will no unit in this still assembly, be withdrawn ere those weeks are passed from the sum of human existence ? Or if all who listen be spared, may not he who speaks be called away ? Be it so ; I know where a minister's grave should be, and I know what should be his monument : his grave should be in the hearts of those to whom he has witnessed, and his monument—not the sculptured brass, or the breathing marble, or the poetic eulogy—but the pressing onwards to immortality of the people over whom he was set. May God make you all followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises !



## THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE OF CHRISTIANS.

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"The world knoweth us not."—1 JOHN, iii. 1.

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WE shall consider these words as the language of truth, and not of complaint; a remark which it will be proper for you to carry with you through the whole of the ensuing discourse. The Christian grieves that the world is ignorant of its religious welfare: but he is not ignorant of his own; he is informed, he is convinced; he says he will act independent of others. He will go on, if universally deserted; he will move forward, if universally opposed. He is too wise to be defeated, too much attached to be drawn aside by allurements, too dignified to descend from his elevation to crouch to meanness. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." The path of life is light to the wise. He can say with Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

Let us proceed with our subject. To do some justice to it let us consider three things. The first regards the world. The second, The world's ignorance of Christians. The third, The Christian's independence of the world: for I think no doubt but we shall be able to make it appear before the close of the sermon, that if the world knoweth us not we can go on very well without it.

First, let us consider what is here mentioned as the subject—**THE WORLD.**

Now the world here means *the world of which the Saviour says Satan is the Prince; and of which Paul says Satan is the God.* "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." He is called the Prince of this world because they are his subjects, and he rules over them, and in them. And he is called the God of this world because they love him. Be not astonished at the language, Satan has his sabbaths, and his sanctuaries, his ministers, his preachers, his means and ordinances, as well as the God of Truth. When, therefore, a sinner is converted, he is said to be turned from the power of Satan unto God: turned from his power as a prince, and turned from his power as a god.

Further, the world here means *the unbelieving world*, and the reason is, because it is always in the Scripture spoken of as being in the way of destruction, and you are dissuaded from it. Thus we read that to walk according to the course of this world, is to walk according to the Prince of the power of the air. Hence, says Paul, "Be not conformed to this world." Hence, says James, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." And hence says John, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

Further, *the wicked are called the world*, not only because they are worldly, but because they have been, down to this time, immensely the majority of mankind. There was a time when every imagination of the heart was evil continually, and when Noah was seen alone righteous in that generation. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah, but ten righteous men were not there. How few would have preserved Israel in the time of Jeremiah! "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." And says the Apostle John in this epistle, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Oh, yes, some are ready to say, but it is not so now. Take, then, first, a globe, and colour all the parts of the earth where Christianity, in any form, in any degree prevails; and, if you are a Christian, your feelings must be shocked at the sight of the smallness of the dimensions; you must fall on your knees, and say, "Let thy ways be known on earth, thy saving health among all nations." Then take a Christian country, and examine the inhabitants: take a single village, and observe the tempers and lives of the rustics, and then see whether the stones in their churchyards are chargeable with truth or falsehood when they tell you that all the parish is gone or going to heaven. Then take a congregation, one of a more evangelical complexion, and follow them out from the house of God into common life; and let candour itself tell you how many of these abide with God in their calling, how many walk in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

"Broad is the road that leads to death,  
And thousands walk together there,  
But wisdom shows a narrower path,  
With here and there a traveller."

The Second regards **THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE OF CHRISTIANS**. "The world knoweth us not," that is, it does not distinguish us, it does not approve of us, it actually dislikes and opposes us: that is the threefold meaning of the expression.

When it is said the world knoweth us not, it means that *it does not discern us*. In fact, they generally keep aloof from Christians; they hear few of their words, and see few of their actions, and never see what makes them Christians. They have an absolute inability to judge; they cannot know what a Christian is, I mean as to his principles, as to his conduct, as to his heavenly resources. Therefore the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual knoweth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." Here is the difference between the Christian and the natural man. The Christian knows the natural man, but the natural man does not know the Christian. The natural man has never been in the Christian's condition; but the Christian has been in his condition. The natural man does not know what the service of God is; but the Christian knows what the service of the world is, and he knows it is not pleasantness and peace; he knows that it is not liberty, but bondage; he well knows that whatever the profession of its votaries may be, they are only instances of hypocrisy;

for he knows that his God has said, "There is no peace to the wicked." The world therefore knoweth them not.

The people of the world wonder you do not run with them to the same excess: they think it strange you can turn your backs from these scenes of dissipation, which seem essential to their very life, not being aware of the change that has taken place in you—not aware that you have discovered something infinitely better—not aware that you can now as easily resign these as a man can refuse the toys of infancy, or as a thirsty traveller can refuse the dirty puddle when he has discovered the fountain of living waters. They think it strange that you are happy and tranquil under losses and trials, which, to use the words of Isaiah, make them "roar like mad bulls." They can see your burdens, but they cannot see the everlasting arms that are laid under you. They can see your afflictions—alas! these are all visible enough—but they cannot see your access to the throne of the heavenly grace: they cannot see your enjoyments and comforts in the Holy Ghost: they cannot see how, when ready to faint, you believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Then they think it strange that you are active and zealous in those services which, instead of bringing you worldly repute and advantage, often draw on you reproach, and occasion you self-denial. For they are ignorant of the grand lever in your character; they know not the main spring of the machinery; they know not the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. You run all over the world to gather resemblances of him, and then you say:

"All are too mean to speak his worth,  
Too mean to set the Saviour forth."

He has no form or comeliness in him that they should desire him. They therefore say, "What is your beloved more than another beloved that you so charge us?" But "the world knoweth us not."

They are equally ignorant of the nature of your sorrow: and because it is said that you are to come with weeping as well as supplication; because they know that repentance is not confined to the beginning of the Christian life, but is to pervade the whole of it; they conclude you must be very gloomy, and mopish, and melancholy: whereas, you know that there is a pleasure even in that, and that your repenting hours have been your happiest, and that you have found more satisfaction at the foot of the cross in beholding him whom you have pierced, than you ever found in the pleasure of sin. You know that they who mourn shall be blessed as well as comforted. The world is always ready to charge Christians with Antinomianism: whereas if they knew all they would find Christians bewailing before God their sins, and mourning over their infirmities, their wandering thoughts, and their imperfections in their motives, which their despisers cannot discern at all. There is nothing in which the ignorance of the world is more apparent than in thinking the doctrines of the Gospel have a licentious tendency: They will have it that a Christian may live as he lists. There is a sense in which this is true—not in the meaning of their censure, but in another view they may, they do live as they list. You may say of a man, he may wallow in the mire. But he cannot. Why can he not? has he not legs and feet to carry him into the ditch, as well as the sow? Yes, but he has not the same disposition. You may say of a mother that she will throw her son into the river; but she will not. Why? has she not hands and strength

to throw it in? Yes, but it would be against every feeling of her nature. "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Now, it is the same with the world; they judge by themselves, they suppose that Christians deem sin to be lawful; whereas it is not only their avoidance, but their abhorrence, and therefore they are not likely to indulge in it even if their sentiments would allow it. They suppose that Christians deem holiness to be something of a caste; whereas they feel it to be their privilege. Holiness is their privilege, and therefore they are not likely to disregard it. But the world knoweth us not.

And this non-discernment of Christians by the world is aided by their external circumstances often. "The King's daughter is all glorious within," but not without—that is, according to the estimation of carnal men. Had you seen the tabernacle in the wilderness you would have seen a common tent covered with badgers' skins and rams' skins dyed red; but if you had entered in, there was Deity upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim. It is the same with Christians: the light of the Christian is hid, and it is hid not only in his principles, in his resources, in his experience, but it is hid in the obscurity of his condition, in his penury, in the reproach thrown upon him. You very well know that nothing makes a figure in the eyes of some people but money, and power, and authority, and rank. Now, if a Christian is to be judged by this standard, "not many wise, not many mighty are called."

But, after all, this is the lowest sense of the expression. When it is said, the world knoweth us not, the meaning is, *it does not approve of us*. The word "know" is often to be taken in this sense for complaisance, acknowledgment. Thus the Apostle John says, "If any man love God, the same will be loved of him." Thus Paul says, "Know them who labour among you and are over you in the word," that is, acknowledge them in a manner becoming their calling. Now how does the world stand here with regard to this? As far as it discerns them does it admire them? Does it esteem them? Does it esteem them as regenerate and spiritual? For this is the question. There is another sense in which they may like them; not because of their spiritual and heavenly-minded qualities; but, if I may so express myself, notwithstanding these, and in spite of these, there is a sense in which they may like them. For they may have other claims; they may be relations, they may be friends, they may be handsome, they may be gentle. Why not? They may be learned as well as others, and amiable and agreeable as well as others. And thus they may approve of them—not because they are born of God, not because they are renewed after his image. The people of the world must often come in contact with real Christians; but they do not make them their models, their chosen companions; they do not wish to be intimate with them when most at home: when they are in their own elements, when they are engaged in spiritual concerns, they know them not, and they would be withdrawn from them.

People of the world are under obligations to Christians. Christians are useful to all. For their sakes it is the very frame of nature continues; for their sakes judgments are withheld or withdrawn; for their sakes blessings are bestowed or continued. If they occupy no public situation or office, if they are hardly known to their neighbours, yet they have power; they retire and pray, and their supplications ascend to heaven. Yet the ungrateful world knows them not. If men serve the state they are enriched and advanced. When does



the world bestow pensions on Christians? When have they ever reared statues to preachers of the Gospel, to ministers, to Christians who exemplified the word of God in their conversation? And yet your Nelsons and your Wellingtons, your heroes, your statesmen, are raised far above all these. Christians, however poor, are not overlooked now in the records of the heavenly grace, where they are called "the repairers of the breach," "the restorers of the paths to dwell in." But the world knoweth them not.

More is still implied than has been expressed: and the meaning is, that *it actually dislikes us*. If proof be necessary, it will be proper to turn to other passages where the Christian and the world are mentioned together. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," says John in this Epistle. Says the Saviour, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And again, "The world cannot hate you," because they were so much like it, "but me it hateth, because I testify that its deeds are evil." This will always produce displeasure: this testimony, when not a word is spoken, will be enough to prove a censure, and to condemn. They who wish to remain asleep, will be sure to hate the noise which prevents their slumber. They that hate the light and love darkness, will be sure to hate the light that breaks in upon their revolting practices. So it has always been.

I am well aware we must talk softly if we touch the subject of persecution. But persecution admits of various degrees: and these degrees will always be determined by education, by civilization, by the laws of friendship, or the laws of the country. Among us persecution is not legal: we can all sit under our own vine, and under our own fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid. But there are instances of injustice beyond the reach of law. We have known in our day, and know now, servants who have been dismissed from their places, workmen removed from their employ, farmers who have had a refusal of their leases, relations who have been excluded from a will, paupers who have been refused to share the very poor allowance, because they would follow the convictions of their own conscience. The carnal mind is enmity against God. The tongue can no man tame. And the sacred writers tell us that evil speaking will be the portion of the righteous in all ages, and in all places. They will always turn your very excellences into scandal; your zeal is enthusiasm, your faith folly, your hope delusion, your meekness meanness. They have always some convenient names, and misrepresentations, and slander. Christians are poor, and ignorant, and illiterate; they are deceived and imposed upon. If they are in earnest, then they have a disordered imagination: if they are strict in their morals, then they are hypocrites, and no better than they should be. If there is nothing blameable in their conduct, then they impeach their motives: if there are some miscarriages among the few, they impute the same to the whole. I have long been convinced it is vain to expect real candour from the world; and that those who will be followers of the Redeemer must go forth bearing his reproach. For the world knoweth us not. It does not discern us—it does not approve us—it actually dislikes us.

Thirdly, **THE CHRISTIAN'S INDEPENDENCE OF THE WORLD.** If the world know us not, we shall see whether we are not able to go on very well without them. We are ready to concede that the world has its impressions, and that

there are many men who are much influenced by it. We are aware it is not ignorance, but cowardice and shame that keep many from attending where the Gospel is preached, and from joining with those who have the prize of the high calling in view. Why did not the Pharisees believe, when they saw the blind restored to sight, and the dead raised? They feared the people lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Did Felix deem Paul worthy of imprisonment? He did not; but "willing to show the Jews a favour, he left Paul bound." Did Herod deem Peter deserving of death? He did not: but having slain John with the sword, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Did Pilate believe our Saviour to be guilty? He washed his hands, and said; "I am pure from the blood of this just person." Why then did he deliver "him to be crucified?" To gain popularity with the multitude. The Apostle tells us, "When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." He tell us that "they held the truth in unrighteousness." For you find, with all the knowledge they possessed, they conformed to the common superstition and idolatry. The divine Socrates, as he is called, when dying, ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Esculapius. "They held the truth in unrighteousness," the Apostle says. And this is the case with numbers: they know what is right, but they hold the truth in unrighteousness: they have a thousand convictions that correspond with the Scripture, but they hold them in unrighteousness. And hence with regard to some of you, you know that your first question is not, Is such a thing true? Is such a thing right? But, What will people say of me? Hence the most flimsy objections are enough to satisfy your minds. Am I to condemn all my fellow creatures, and give out that I am better than every body else? Hence the admonition, "Follow not the multitude to do evil."

Now, with regard to these impressions, let us advert to several things.

First, the world knoweth us not, it is true; and *it is better it should be so*. For, if we are redeemed, if we are spiritual, we need not lament their distance: the more remote they are, the more safe shall we be from their influence. It is not easy to mingle with the heathen, and not learn their worship. Even Joseph, when in Egypt, learned to swear "by the life of Pharaoh."

Secondly, the world knoweth us not, *and there is nothing peculiar in this*. Moses endured scorn and reproach rather than run into sin. David was ridiculed for reposing his all in God. Isaiah was sawn in sunder for his fidelity. The Apostles were considered the scum and the off-scouring of the earth, and not one died a natural death but John, and he in his old age was banished, and worked as a slave in the isle of Patmos. And when Paul was apprehended for Christ Jesus' sake, the Saviour says, How many things he is to suffer for my name's sake. And shall we refuse to drink the cup that they drank of, and be baptized with the baptism which they were baptized with? What are your trials compared with those that have been endured by the many that have gone before? You are ready to excuse and to extenuate your conduct: you are ready to say that your trials are too strong for resistance. What are the difficulties that infest your course? If you follow such a course, you say, Into what a state will you be reduced? Into what lion's den will you be thrown? If you follow this course, will you be deprived of your liberty? No. Will you be deprived of your substance? No. Will you be deprived of your bread? Nothing like this: but we find this would be your language (you would be

ashamed to speak out, therefore I speak for you,) I must rise a little earlier in the morning. I must give alms—oh, dreadful—I shall have less to hoard up. If I refuse to sell on the Sabbath I shall be deprived of a little of my profits. If I abide by such convictions, I may lose the smile of friends, and incur the frowns of enemies, or draw the laugh of such a fool. These are your perils and jeopardies: these are our persecutions and our martyrdoms in the present day; these are the tribulations because of the world.

Thirdly, the world knows us not, *but it knew Him not*; for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not," "he had not where to lay his head." When will his poor followers remember that his name was cast out? When will they remember that the servant is not above his master, nor the disciple above his Lord? "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." And is not this enough? Can you refuse to suffer in such company? Can you refuse to suffer for the sake of one who has done so much for your soul—one who has said, that even in this life ye shall obtain more, and in that which is to come, life everlasting? We think sometimes, if professors of Christianity were free from inconsistency, the world would admire and dread them. But then comes the difficulty: we meet with none such. There was a person in the world for three and thirty years, free from every inconsistency, free from every impropriety: he was wisdom itself, he was prudence itself, he was amiableness itself, he was loveliness itself; and yet they were not satisfied till they had imbrued their hands in his blood.

Fourthly, the world knows us not, *but it shall know us*. The present is only the beginning of your happiness; you are husbandmen, and the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the ground. You are heirs, and "the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth not from a servant, though he be lord of all:" he must wait till he comes of age. Your day, Christians, is coming—the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. Then every cloud will be dispersed, and the righteous shall shine forth as stars in the firmament of heaven. "Then shall he return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." "Wisdom will be justified in all her children;" "for I will bring them to thy feet, and they shall know that I have loved them." And then they shall be made to exclaim, "Fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honour; but they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints." But is not this anticipated by the world now? In their dying hours they begin to see things as they are. And, says Mrs. Savage, the daughter of Philip Henry, "I have always observed this, that the people of the world never speak well of it at parting." They have known too much of it to commend it when dying. There are moments when they begin to see things properly: they see that they are chained, that they are goaded on: then they wonder at their own folly; they are ready to say, "All men are liars." They will know then the meaning of the passage "their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges." Even now they are compelled to pay homage to Christian excellence. Could you distinguish between their words and sentiments, when delusion and imagination give place to the remonstrances of reason, how often would you hear them say, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."



Ministers often mistake when they express the language of the people of the world, when they represent them saying, *My happiness is all over now*. They will utter nothing like this: they will not say, *My happiness is now over*; but they will say, *I never was happy*. They will not say, *I am now miserable*, but, *I always was miserable*; they feel they were miserable in time only to be more miserable in eternity.

Fifthly, the world knoweth us not, *but God does*, on whose frowns or smiles depend our misery or our happiness. It is a light thing to be judged of man's judgment: he that judgeth us is the Lord: in his favour is life, his loving-kindness is better than life. He puts joy into our hearts more than when their oil and wine increase. Let them curse but bless thou.

Our subject is a commendation of Christianity. The Christian course is not darkness, but light: it will bear examination. The evidences of their religion are not arguments but facts. Prophecies are not messages like the heathen oracles; they were delivered ages before their accomplishment, and some of them are accomplishing now. Their miracles are not alone to be wondered at, or denied; they were performed in public before the face even of enemies. Their promises are as real as they are valuable, and they are able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. The world is like Jael standing at the door of the tent in the evening, spreading the mantle, and bringing out butter in a lordly dish, but hiding the hammer and the nail till she had smote the nail fast into the temples of Sisera. But it is not thus with Christianity as to the dangers or sacrifices which it may require: instead of concealing these, it tells us from the beginning we shall have tribulation; that if any man believe in Christ he shall suffer persecution. The Saviour calls on us to count the cost, and calculate the labour of the journey, and see whether you have resources to bear the expenses of the one, and undergo the fatigues of the other. Christianity does not encourage its converts by flattery: it does not comfort its sufferers by denying their trials; it allows them to feel them, and it allows them to feel them deeply; but it does enough to animate them under all. It can enable the Christian to dispense with the world, and the things of the world, the world that is every thing to others. As to carnal men, when they are deprived of their outward possessions, they say with Micah, "You have taken away my gods, and what have I more." But the Christian having nothing possesseth all things. The Christian must be a very resourceful man, a man of unbounded resources, of infinite resources. His mouth is filled with marrow and fatness. He can dispense with plenty, and say, "Though the fig-tree does not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." He can dispense with liberty, and say, having the presence of God he desireth not the presence of the world. He can dispense with health, and say, God maketh his bed in his sickness. He can dispense with liberty, and say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." He can dispense with the whole universe, and when the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, standing upon the ashes he can exclaim, here are new heavens and a new earth for me, wherein dwelleth righteousness.



## THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HARVEST, AND THE SCARCITY OF THE LABOURERS.

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REV. R. KNILL.

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD CHAPEL, MAY 18, 1834 \*.

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“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”—MATTHEW, ix. 37, 38.

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It is computed that fifty people die every minute, upon an average, throughout the year. Since we entered this sacred place many of our fellow creatures have entered into eternity. Let us suppose that one of these was a converted heathen, that for many years of the latter part of his life he walked with God, that he enjoyed the blessedness of a pardoned sinner, that he died in the faith, and that an abundant entrance was ministered unto him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: he has now entered on the bliss of heaven, he has joined the songs of the redeemed, he is become a companion of the glorified; and amidst the shouts of the innumerable multitudes that surround the throne, we hear a fresh burst of joy when he exclaims, “I was born a heathen, I lived many years a heathen, and I should have died a heathen, but a servant of Jesus Christ came to the land of my fathers; he preached the Gospel, I heard, I believed; and now I am for ever with the Lord.” Oh, my brethren, have you been instrumental in sending that sinner the Gospel? Let the thought animate us to send it to every creature; for this is the design of all missionary efforts, to make sinners happy in this world, and happy for ever and ever.

But we follow another of these departed spirits. That man was born a heathen, he lived a heathen, he died a heathen; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. He has now entered upon the miseries of the bottomless pit; he is become the companion of the devil and his angels, while the worm begins to prey upon him that can never die, and that flame begins to kindle upon him that never can be quenched. We hear his cry, “No man cared for my soul; no missionary of Jesus Christ came to the land of my fathers to point out to me my danger, and show me the way of salvation: now I am lost—lost for ever.”

My dear friends, let the thought sink down into our hearts, and let it rouse us to warn guilty men to flee from the wrath to come. Let it animate us to search out perishing multitudes, lest their blood be required at our hands. Let it animate us with the delightful thought, that Jesus will accompany the effort when we endeavour to send the Gospel to every creature.

The London Missionary Society has been established almost forty years;

\* Anniversary Sermon for the London Missionary Society.

and there is nothing which it has set its hand unto but God has smiled upon. This evening I stand here as the feeble advocate of a missionary society; I stand here as the feeble advocate of hundreds of millions of perishing heathens; and I address you in the language of your Saviour, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

The first thing that we are to attend to in this text is, the harvest, which is plenteous; the second is, the labourers, who are few; and the third is, the Saviour's plan for increasing their number. Lift up your hearts, my dear friends, to God, and entreat assistance and blessing for the feeble and guilty creature who is addressing you.

Let us first look at **THE HARVEST**. It is too vast to be taken within the verge of one short sermon. China, India, Birmah, and Japan; Africa; the West Indies; South America; Russian Tartary, Persia, and the islands of the South Sea: all this is too vast for our consideration at the present opportunity; I have seen enough of these countries with my own eyes to occupy more than all the missionaries of Jesus Christ that are now on the face of the globe. I shall confine myself to two particulars.

First let us look at *Africa*. Africa was one of the earliest scenes of missionary enterprise, as far as our society is concerned: here Vanderkemp and his colleagues laboured, who have been followed by numerous others; and in many places the wilderness begins to blossom, and the desert assumes the appearance of the garden of the Lord. What should we say, were we travelling in Africa, and stopped on a Sunday evening at one of the missionary stations in Caffraria, and there saw the missionary writing thus in his journal: "Yesterday, seventeen waggons arrived at this station." Whence came they? "From various places at a distance, over the burning sand." With what were they laden? "With men, and women, and children." Why came they hither on the Saturday? That they might be in time for the service of God on the Sabbath: "and this morning there were three hundred Caffres at the prayer-meeting at seven o'clock." Brethren, in all this glorious land, where Bibles and Missionary efforts are carried on as they are nowhere else, where is there a prayer-meeting at seven o'clock on a Sabbath morning, and three hundred persons attend? It was so in Caffraria, amidst the deserts of Africa, where your missionaries have been ploughing up the fallow ground, and sowing the seed of the Gospel; and now the harvest is ripe.

A letter has been received by the Society, which states that Dr. Philip, in one of his late journeys, met a whole tribe of the inhabitants of Africa coming to meet him. Why were they coming? They said to him, "We must have a missionary, and we will make him a chief:" but there was no missionary to be had. After that he met a chief with a thousand head of cattle. Why had he brought them? That he might buy a missionary; for he would not go back without one: of course the thousand cattle were to be sold in order to purchase the man of God: but there was none. So in every place where our missionaries have been labouring, and where the Moravian, or the Wesleyan missionaries have been labouring, the dew of heaven has descended on the seed; and great and blessed are the results.

Notice in the second place, *India*. I lived about three years in India, on the

shores of Madras. When we were about to step on that land, a number of the heathen came down to meet us. Every one of them had the mark of the beast on his forehead; some had one stroke, some two, and others three, with a star in the middle, all to point out the particular idol which they worshipped. They were not ashamed of their religion, they gloried in it, carrying the mark of it upon their foreheads. That city contained three hundred thousand natives, besides a vast population that had arrived from various parts of the world, and had settled there. There I found a missionary belonging to our society: he had been many years in that place; I was sent out to assist him. To give you a notion of the morals of that people: Mr. L—— told me that, after he had been there some time, and had made a very strict investigation as to the religion of the people, he could only find one person out of three hundred and forty thousand who had family worship in his house. Many of you would be afraid to live in a house where there was no family prayer. The man that does not pray with his wife and children, opens the roof of his house to let down the curse of the Almighty on his household. I hope none present are living as these heathens were. There is something very awful in the thought, that there is a connexion in the Bible between the heathen and the families that call not on the name of God. I hope, if any of you are living in this way, you will take the alarm to-night; and if you can only say, "Lord, have mercy upon us! kneel down with that prayer, and to-morrow God will give you more.

Now, God blessed that good man; and he built a chapel, collected a congregation, established schools, circulated books, and in a variety of ways sowed the seed of divine truth; and it bare fruit to the glory of God. The congregation was a most interesting sight; it was not a congregation of white people—there was seldom a white man in the place; you could look at their countenances, and see the blood of the heathen circulating in their veins: but the effect produced was uncommonly interesting to the missionary. One morning I was preaching to them on the love of Christ; and after service, an interesting youth, about the age of eighteen, came into the vestry, and said, "Mr. Knill, I want to ask you a question." "What is it, my young friend?" "I want to know, sir, whether what you said this morning is true or not." "True?" said I; "I said many things this morning—which do you mean?" "Is that true that you said about the love of Christ? You said that Christ loved me so much (thinking he was the person addressed) that, if I asked him, he would pardon my sins: is that true? And that, if I entreated him, he would come and take up his abode in my heart; and that, if I trusted him, he would save my soul; and that, after my body was dead, he would take my spirit to heaven: is that true, sir?" I said, "My dear youth, if that is what you mean, all that is true, and infinitely more is true that I could tell you about the love of Christ, for it passeth all description." At that I saw the tear rolling down his black cheek, and, lifting up his hand, he said, with inimitable simplicity, "Oh, thou blessed Jesus, come and take possession of my heart." Think what I must have felt. I had left all that was dear to me on earth, to go and preach salvation to these lost sons of men; and here was one, whose mother was at that moment worshipping an idol, lifting up his hand and heart, saying, "Oh, thou blessed Jesus, come and take possession of my heart."

My dear young friends, suppose every young person were to do so to-night;

it would be heaven begun below ; it would be glory in the bud , it would be the commencement of a life of peace, a life of usefulness, a life of happiness. And why should it not be so ? You will not be happy till you have consecrated your hearts to Jesus ; you will not be safe till you have Christ for your friend. And he is here ; he has often visited this place, and he has come again to-night, with his hand full of blessings, and his heart full of love : he invites you, and says, “ They that seek me early shall find me.”

This young man was a clerk in a merchant's counting-house, where he spent a certain number of hours every day : but having felt the love of Christ, having given up his heart to Christ, he began to feel for the poor Gentoos, whose brows were stamped with the marks of heathenism—he spent the evening now with telling the love of Jesus ; and since I have returned to Europe, I have received a letter from him, written in the same beautiful style, telling me what delight he has in going among the heathen, and proclaiming the love of Jesus. You see a life of usefulness begins with the consecration of the heart : when that is done, all is easy and delightful that follows.

After labouring a few years amongst this people, with peculiar interest and delight, it pleased God to afflict me. My medical men advised me to visit Travancore, as a place likely to be beneficial to my health : and there I found one missionary ; one missionary in a kingdom, and only one. There were a few Church missionaries in another part of Travancore ; but they were labouring among the Syrian Christians. There was a vast excitement among the people, very similar to that produced among the Samaritans, when the women who had seen Christ went to the inhabitants, and said, “ Come, and see a man who told me all things that ever I did.” I found Mr. Mead living at a place, the name of which signifies “ The serpent's temple,” because there was an amazing large temple in which was the figure of a serpent : that was the god they adored, from which they sought their happiness ; and the town had its name from that circumstance. People who have not lived among the heathen, have no conception of the need that missionaries have of being remembered in the prayers of God's people at home : everything around them is corrupt or defiling, is impure or diabolical ; and it is only as they are upheld by the arm of the Redeemer that they can be kept ; and he does it in answer to prayer.

I found Mr. Mead living in a large house. I asked him how it was he had so large a house ? “ Why,” said he, “ this house was given me by a convert—not a black man, but a white.” It is sometimes asked, we know, not very kindly, “ What have your missionaries done ?” If we could see all the white men that have been converted by missionaries, by seed sown on the way side, dropped into the hearts of white men by missionaries to the heathen, some now in heaven, some still on earth, we should be astonished at the multitudes thus brought to God. The person who gave Mr. Mead this house, had left Europe when a youth, in hope of “ making his fortune :” he made his fortune, and became a colonel in the army ; but all the while he was living without God. It pleased God, however, to bring him into contact with missionaries, and their conversation and example was blessed to him, and he became a Christian. When I saw him, his heart was devoted to the Saviour. He said to Mr. Mead, “ This house was built for my residence ; let it now be the property of the Missionary Society, and here live and carry on your missionary exertions ”



The nouse had a great number of windows ; and in the window seats I saw a great number of leaves, and asked what they were? " They are petitions," said he. " Petitions from whom?" " From the serpent worshippers." " How came they to send you petitions?" " Why, a great number of people have been to the mission house, and have heard the Gospel, and they have gone back to their villages and towns, telling the people what the white man said: they have brought these petitions." The meaning of these petitions was this: " Take us under your instruction, that we may learn how to become happy." Oh, my brethren, what a thought! They had tried what heathenism could do, and it had not made them happy: they had worshipped serpents, been on pilgrimages, and had tortured the body; but it had not made them happy. Nothing makes a sinner happy till he comes to Christ. If you had the world at your command, and not the Saviour for your portion, you would be wretched, and miserable, and lost: it is Christ alone makes a man happy. These men found they were not happy, and they applied to the servant of God to teach them the road to happiness. They came in crowds, day after day; and all had some question to ask. One would say, " Can you tell me, sir, how my sins may be pardoned?" Another would say, " Do you know what will become of my soul when my body is dead?" What an interesting state of mind is that to be brought into! I am persuaded there are vast numbers of people in London who never think of it.

Since I came home I was travelling in Wiltshire, and, as the coach was going gently down one of the hills in that county, a young man in all the vigour of youth, jumped up on the coach and stood by my side. I said, " These are very pretty cottages, young man." " Yes, sir," said he, " very pretty." " Do you know who lives there?" " Yes, very well." " Do you know where these people will go when they die?" " No, sir, I cannot tell." " Do you know where you will go when you die?" He paused, and then replied in the same way, " No, sir, I cannot tell." " Can't you?" said I, " why you may die to-day, and you have a soul worth more than all that town before us: don't you know what will become of it, whether it will go to heaven or hell?" The young man, much affected, replied, " To tell you the truth, I never thought much about that." Think of a man, with a heaven to obtain, a hell to escape, a soul to be saved, and never to think about it! Are any of you slighting the great salvation? Are any of you living without an interest in Christ? Are any of you hastening to eternity without thinking of it? Stop and think, lest to-morrow it may be too late!

The interest the people excited in our minds, led us to adopt every plan we could think of to give information on the subject. We established schools; we fixed preaching places in central spots, and visited them as often as we could, to explain the amazing love of God in Christ Jesus. I had appointed to meet a number of them at a certain place, and I set off very early in order to be there before the sun rose. I never can forget the scene: I had to pass through one of their beautiful cocoa-nut groves, and I saw several clusters of people standing at various distances. I perceived the first little party had something smoking. I asked one of them what it was. He said it was part of the sacrifice. What sacrifice? " We have been sacrificing to the devil." That is heathenism. We had the serpent-worship on the one side, and

sacrificing to the devil on the other, and we were living in the midst of it. I reasoned with them, and asked why they sacrificed to that bad spirit. "Why, because he is a bad spirit, and we are afraid of him, and we have been sacrificing to him that he might not hurt us."

I passed on to the people I had appointed to meet. I found about seven hundred assembled to receive me: I never saw so large a congregation in India before: and the thought that many of them had been sacrificing to the devil, or worshipping the serpent, almost overwhelmed me. Some of them were what we call converts, others inquirers, but the greater part were purely heathen. Their turbans were taken off, and as they sat on the ground there was nothing to be seen but a field of black faces, with the white of their eyes sometimes glistening with tears. I addressed them from John, iii. 16, "God so loved the world," &c. We do not preach there as people preach in this country; they could not keep up their attention for half an hour: therefore we turn our preaching into catechism. "Now," said I, "what does this verse teach us? Tell me who loved the world?" A hundred voices immediately answered, "God loved the world." "In what way?" "Why God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son for it." "Was that love?" "Oh yes, great love." "And what benefit may we hope to derive from it?" "Oh," they say, (they generally begin their sentences with "Oh" when they are pleased) "Oh, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish." "What, will all that believe in Jesus Christ not perish?" "Oh! oh!" they replied. "Well, that is glad tidings: is there anything else?" "Yes: that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "Well, if this is to be the happiness of all that believe in Jesus, what is to become of the people outside that know nothing about it? and what will become of the people inside that know it and neglect it?" "Ah," said they, "they must perish." "And shall we let them perish?" "No, no, not let them perish." "What shall we do, then?" "Why, tell them that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son." "And will you tell them?" "Oh," said some, "we have begun already:" others said, "We will begin to-day." What a mercy it will be if some of you, my friends, begin this work to-day!

After I had discoursed with them some time, it struck me it was a good opportunity for me to tell them of the influence of religion as I had seen it in England on persons who were dying, where the sting of death was taken out, and the fear of death was gone, and the hope of heaven filled their souls with rapture. I knew some of the heathen were very much afraid of death; and I supposed the reason was that they did not know what would become of their souls. The man who can say, "For me to live, is Christ, and to die is gain," will not be afraid of death: but to these poor heathens, death is all dark and uncertain; no wonder it makes them afraid. So when I had explained to them the happiness of some people in England, in the prospect of death, I said "Have you ever seen a person die happy?" No reply. I repeated the question: at last one man at a great distance replied, "I have." "Who was he?" "It was my father." "Were you with him when he died?" "Yes; all his family were with him; he sent for us to see how happy he was." "Did he say much?" "Yes, many things I cannot recollect; but one I shall never forget." "What was it?" "Why, after he had called us to his bed-side and given us his blessing,

he raised up his withered arm to heaven, and said, ‘ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;’ and then he died.” It would not be right, my friends, to hold from ourselves the consideration that the cold hand of death will come into our families as it did into that. When that solemn moment comes you may be there to wipe the cold sweat from the pale cheek, or to moisten the parched lips with the cordial: but it is only Christ that can support the soul: it is only the everlasting arm of Jesus that can keep the sinner from sinking into eternal misery. Then what a comfort to survivors when beloved friends are gone, to know that they were committing their spirits into the hands of Jesus: for there is no safety, no comfort, no happiness, but in Jesus. Here we find a worshipper of the serpent, a man who had sacrificed to the devil, converted to God, and dying in the arms of the Saviour.

I was anxious to know more about this man. I asked the son if his father was always so happy. “No,” said he, “my father used to worship the serpent, and sacrifice to evil spirits: but after the servant of Christ came he went to hear him, and when he heard he believed, and after he believed he became happy.” Then the first thing he did was to break his idols, then to forsake the temple, then to break off from idolaters, and join the people of the true God.

We established twenty-seven schools among this people: we had twenty-eight little congregations in different parts of the country. Great numbers of the people had turned from their idols, and received instruction from the Christian missionaries; and a few of them had been raised up to assist us in reading to their fellow sinners, explaining the Word of God as well as they could. At last my health declined there too, and I was forced to return to Europe. Since I have returned, God has wonderfully blessed that mission; the accounts received are uncommonly striking and interesting. Among these serpent-worshippers, these sacrificers to the devil, there are one hundred and ten congregations, one hundred schools, seventy or eighty native preachers: there is a Tract Society in vigorous operation, and they have lately formed among themselves a Society for Building Chapels; seven hundred attended the meeting, many of them spoke very interestingly, a few came forward and offered land on which to erect chapels, others guaranteed timber, and every thing is going on most delightfully; and Mr. Mead says at the end of his communication, “Never did we stand so much in need of labourers as at the present moment.” The harvest truly is “plenteous:” whether we trace the globe from the wilds of Siberia in the north, to Madagascar in the south, or look at any other portion of it, we see the harvest springing up, and the fields becoming white, and the labourers sinking because they are not equal to the important but delightful work of gathering it in.

This leads us to notice,

Secondly, **THE LABOURERS:** “The labourers are few.”

There are several great missionary societies in England, Scotland, America, France, and Germany, and all these societies together have several hundred missionaries. It is heart-cheering that in the space of forty years God has, in his infinite wisdom, raised up so many devout men, who, in every part of the world, are labouring to promote the glory of God. Then there are, in addition to all the white missionaries, the native labourers, who have been converted

to God from amongst the heathen: all our missionary societies are now employing native teachers. This is a subject which I wish particularly to bring before your notice, my heart has been set on it ever since I was in Travancore, that every sanctified talent among the converts in the various nations should be occupied for Christ and employed for the Saviour. A native teacher in Travancore costs about ten pounds annually; in other parts of the world they cost more, I believe: my own little congregation has supported eight teachers in India for some years. There are more than sixty native preachers in Travancore. Every Saturday fortnight they come to the mission house; I suppose it is one of the most interesting sights in the world—men who were once idolaters, now devoted to preaching the Gospel. They come to bring in their reports, and to receive further directions: after that they go again in various directions to places where, on the morrow, they may proclaim salvation through the blood of the Lamb.

“The labourers are few,” but we ought to rejoice and bless God that there are so many as there are, and that he has raised up so many among the heathen to labour as native teachers. How many young men, too, are willing to go as God pleases to open a way. Then we must consider what a vast fund there is collected from year to year for this object: this year our society has collected fifty thousand pounds to spread the Gospel through the world, and all the societies are more or less flourishing: God is pouring down his blessing on the labours of the missionaries, which, like the leaven, is spreading itself, and will spread till it leavens the whole lump. But “the labourers are few.”

These things will appear best on comparison. Suppose there was one minister of the Gospel living at Stepney, another at St. Paul’s, and another at Hyde Park Corner, and these were the only three servants of Jesus Christ amidst all the teeming multitudes of London and its vicinity: it would be a scanty supply for so large a number of perishing sinners. But this is a vast greater proportion than is to be found among the missionaries in India; there, there is not one labourer to two millions of souls. Then suppose we had one devout servant of God living at Land’s End, in Cornwall, and he had all England’s population committed to him; he never could see them all: but this is not a greater proportion than is actually the case in China. And so wherever we look, we see multitudes dying in their sins, no man able or willing to tell them that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save them that are lost. Still we have reason to rejoice that so many good men have been raised up to go among the heathen, and that so many poor sinners have been converted to God. We have thus a proof of what God can do, and we may anticipate that he will do greater things than these, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Let us consider the third part, that is, **THE SAVIOUR’S PLAN FOR INCREASING THE NUMBER OF THE LABOURERS.**

Sometimes, when we follow the plans of men, we are apt to be misled; but we never can mistake when we follow Christ’s plan. What advice does he give his servants? “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth more labourers into his harvest.” “Labourers,” not loiterers; they would be a dead weight on the Church, spending the funds, and injuring the cause. We want “labourers,” men who will work for God and for souls



We observe in the first place, that where persons offer this prayer in sincerity, *they make a solemn acknowledgment that God must do all the work.* When we kneel down in our closet and offer up this prayer, it is a solemn acknowledgment that we can do nothing in missionary operations without God. It is God alone can change the heart and raise up young men; it is God alone can give them the qualifications; he alone can make them apt to learn, apt to teach. It is God that preserves their lives, God that preserves their characters unspotted, God that can give them access to the heathen, and God that can bless their labours. We never can too simply depend upon him for all this. God is the great Author of all the good in the world; if a sinner is converted, it is the work of God's Spirit; if a sinner is brought to flee from the wrath to come, it is the work of his Spirit; if a young man is raised to go to the heathen, it is the work of his Spirit. I once attended a prayer-meeting at Birmingham, which left a strong impression on my mind, and often cheered me amidst discouragements. There were two thousand people at that prayer-meeting; and often when my soul has been cast down, the thought that two thousand people met together to beseech God to pour out his blessing on missionary efforts, raised me up again.

In the second place, when a minister and a congregation offer up this prayer and solemnly enter into its spirit, they mean that, when God raises up such men, *they will furnish the means to convey them to the heathen, and support them when they get there.* How delightful to think that many who offer this prayer mean what they say. There is Mr. Alexander Birnie, who has sent many missionaries to the South Seas free of expense. Mr. Ellis told me that the passage of the last missionaries who went to the South Seas, would have been a thousand pounds, but Mr. Birnie gave them a free passage. Then there is Mr. Angus, he has sent a great number of missionaries free to the Bay of Honduras, in the West Indies. Then there is a good Methodist at Bristol, who in like manner has sent several missionaries to the West Indies; he told me the other day that his heart ached because he had a ship ready to sail, but, though several missionaries were waiting to go, they were not prepared to sail then; if they had been, he would have taken them free. There is a good man at Greenock, who sends ships to the East Indies; and he says, that whenever we have a missionary, and he has a ship going out, he will take him. There is Mr. Bowden, of Hull, who says, that if any missionaries are going to Russia, or the Black Sea, he will send them free. We live in wonderful times, but all we see is only just the commencement of that period when the merchants shall come forward, and the abundance of the sea shall be converted to Christ. There may be shipowners in this congregation to-night: if any of you are of this class, think what a privilege it is to send missionaries to the heathen. You enjoy the advantages of commerce with those places, but if you send them the unsearchable riches of Christ, the pearl of great price, you send a blessing that never can be fully estimated.

How delightful it is to think that there is this willingness to send, and provide for, missionaries to the heathen. I have visited many parts of England and Scotland, and, with adoring gratitude to God, I can assure you, that, wherever I have been, I have seen and felt the kindness of God's servants, of ministers and people, in the most extraordinary manner; so that I have sometimes gone into a chamber and wept for joy. I remembered that the Saviour had not where

to lay his head; but I, a poor guilty creature, was overwhelmed with kindness. I have seen delightful instances of love to Christ, of attachment to his cause, and of zeal for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen.

Our society's funds are thirteen thousand pounds more than last year. I used to say, I thought our friends could raise a hundred thousand pounds a-year; there is love and money enough in the churches: I used to say I thought so, now I know it; I have seen the goodly land; it is a land flowing with milk and honey; and we see the poor and the rich contributing of what God has given them to advance this blessed cause.

In the third place, when young men utter this prayer, they mean, that, if it is the will of God, *they are ready to become labourers*: when they pray "Send forth labourers into the harvest," they mean, if they mean anything, "If thou wilt condescend to accept me, if thou wilt qualify me, and if thou wilt commission me, here am I, send me." We must take care lest we mock God in our prayers. What would you think of an interesting young Christian praying in his closet this prayer? "Oh, thou God of the harvest, the heathen are perishing, multitudes are dying for lack of knowledge; send forth labourers, but spare me. I have too many friends, too much money, too important a situation at home: spare me." Why you would think the man was mocking God. But this is the meaning of it, when the subject is brought home, if the man draws back.

Since I came home I have often been asked this question, which I could never answer: "Why are there no more rich young men come forward to fill up our academies, to take their place in our colleges, and to go forth to the heathen?" I put the question to you: Why is it? Is the love of money, is the love of ease, is the love of parents, is the love of home, so attractive that Jesus can have no part nor lot in your hearts? Jesus Christ may call, and the heathen may call, but they cannot hear. Why is this my brethren? Have you never read in the Psalms what the king said? "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Some people think it would be a disparagement to their character; but here is a Monarch who has no equal; he sways the sceptre, all are obedient to him; and yet he counts it his highest honour to preach the Gospel. God had but one Son, and he became the minister of the sanctuary: Jesus Christ had but one heart, and he gave it up to bleed for you that you might obtain salvation. I was preaching once at St. Petersburg, from "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and there came a man to me afterwards, and said, "You spoiled my prayer for ever; I shall never be able to pray again." The fact was, he used to repeat that prayer when he was not forgiving, and his conscience became alarmed. I am persuaded that the man who seriously considers the matter will never again utter this prayer in our text with comfort to himself, and delight to his own soul, unless there is a correspondent feeling which induces him to say, "If I can in any way be a labourer, here am I, send me."

I have received a letter, informing me that four young men, and one young woman, at Wycliff Chapel, have spoken to the deacons on the great and important work of missions, with a view to engage in it. At the same time I received another letter from a young man on the same subject; and several others have spoken to me this week with the same view. Is not the Spirit of the Lord being

poured out on our congregations, when our young men and young women are declaring that they are willing to go, and to labour, and to die, so that Jesus Christ may be exalted and sinners saved? I am persuaded that in exact proportion as the Spirit is poured on our churches, that men and women are willing to go, there will be a corresponding liberality on the part of the more aged Christians, and such as cannot go, to supply an abundance of funds. I have heard some good men speak gloomily about the funds: I never felt gloomy about them; Jesus Christ has all your hearts in his hands, and if his love is shed abroad in our hearts, we always know by the collection whether there was much of the love of Christ stirring in the hearts of the people, filling your souls with desire to advance his glory. What an enlivening effect it would have on the pastors if in all our congregations one, two, or three were raised up for the missionary work. I have had the happiness of knowing eight such persons, who were brought to the knowledge of the truth through my instrumentality, and are now engaged in missions to the heathen. Brethren, let us pray for it, and labour for it, and we shall have it.

Observe, in the last place, that when Christian parents offer up this prayer, *they express their willingness that their children should go*. When a father and mother kneel down and say, "The Lord of the harvest send forth labourers into the harvest," they mean, "If thou should be pleased, in thy infinite compassion, to touch the heart of one of my children, I will give him to thee, I will consecrate him to thee, I will give up my greatest honour and my greatest blessing." Suppose you heard a father praying, and he was uttering the language of my text, and after he had finished, that he said, "But, gracious God, spare my son, do not take my daughter; I cannot give up my children; take my neighbour's son, take my neighbour's daughter, but let mine remain at home." Do you think there is a parent in this congregation, who has sufficient love to Jesus Christ to be able, in the silence of the closet and the retirement of his chamber, when engaged in sweet communion with God—is there a parent present capable of saying, "Yes, my blessed Jesus, my adorable Saviour, my omnipotent Friend, after all thou hast done for me and my children, if thou shouldst call one of them to go to the heathen, I will give him up; I will go with him to the ship, I will place him on board the vessel, I will send him to the heathen in the hope of meeting him in heaven, with many a convert whom he has been instrumental in bringing there!"

I think, in proportion as we bring this subject home to our consciences and hearts, our happiness will increase and abound. The person who loves Christ so much as to be able to give himself to the cause, can he very well doubt about his love to the Saviour? And the parent who can cheerfully yield up his child to Jesus, will have with it a bright evidence of his own interest in redeeming love. But there is that which withholdeth more than is meet, and which tendeth to poverty; so little done for Christ bringeth leanness into the soul, and maketh it go mourning in its way.

Now, my dear friends, what remains but that we enter into the spirit of the text, in simple dependence on God for the divine blessing, for power to touch the hearts of sinners, and to make them meet to serve him—young men to go, parents to give them up, ministers and people to contribute to support the cause throughout the world; then God, even our own God, will give us his

blessing, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. And as the redeemed multitudes come home to glory, one after another, the labourers shall shout and sing, "One planted, and another watered, but God gave the increase, to whom be glory, for ever and ever." Amen.



## THE STILL SMALL VOICE.

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REV. J. HAMBLETON, A.M.

CHAPEL OF EASE, HOLLOWAY, JULY 27, 1834.

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And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."—1 KINGS, xix. 11, 12.

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WE this evening heard, in our first lesson, part of the history of a very uncommon man, who was very remarkable for faith and boldness; and yet, as we heard, even the faith of an Elijah was alloyed by unbelief, and his boldness by fear. How just the remark of Bishop Hall, "The strongest and holiest saint upon earth is subject to some qualms of fear and infirmity: to be always and unchangeably good, is proper only to the glorified spirits in heaven." Yet the infirmities of good men are no fit matter for the scorn of infidels, or the imitation of inconsistent Christians. They are recorded in God's word as warnings: they brought very much of discomfort to those who were their subjects: it was when Elijah was in that comfortless state of mind, that he witnessed the remarkable manifestation of God, described in our text.

We will, first of all, consider the occasion, or train of circumstances, which led to this manifestation of God: secondly, the manifestation itself, with its lessons to Elijah: and thirdly, its lessons to ourselves. May God humble us, that we may all receive the lessons which he intends us to learn by this portion of his truth.

The first point is, THE OCCASION, OR TRAIN OF CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH LED TO THIS MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO THE PROPHET ELIJAH. In the preceding chapter we heard, in our morning service of the day, of Elijah's boldly rebuking king Ahab, facing the eight hundred and fifty idolatrous priests, obtaining fire from heaven in answer to prayer, to the honour of Jehovah and the confusion of Baal, before the assembly of Israel. Then, we heard of him slaying the idolatrous priests. After this came the long-wished for rain; first the cloud like a man's hand; then the heaven "black with clouds and wind, and a great rain;" and Elijah full of zeal and boldness, running before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. There the preceding chapter left his history. But presently (who would have thought it from such a man?)—presently, when Ahab goes home, and tells Jezebel his wife all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all the false prophets with the sword, and she, filled with rage,

swears by her idol gods, that ere to-morrow at that hour, his life should go for theirs. He shrinks with fear before the gathering storm: he who had faced Ahab, and reproved him boldly for his sins—he who had met eight hundred and fifty prophets, and had brought them to test their religion by an open sign from God—is now terrified at the threat of this angry woman, and runs for his life to Beersheba, there dismisses his servant, plunges into the solitude of the wilderness, and there, sitting down under a juniper tree, gives vent to his feelings, requesting that he might die: “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”

Had that prayer been granted, then Elijah would have died under a cloud, leaving a doubt whether his death were not a judgment rather than a mercy; or, perhaps I should say, leaving no doubt, but leaving it quite plain, that such was the case. How different such a departure from the world from the chariot of fire, and the horses of fire, with which he afterwards ascended to heaven! He there fell asleep in his sorrow; an angel provides him food, and once and again prevails on him to arise and eat. After this he wanders about for forty days and forty nights, fasting and comfortless, and then comes to Horeb, the Mount of God, so famous for the giving of the law there to Israel. On Horeb he finds a cave, probably the same in which Moses had been concealed in the clefts of the rock, while the divine glory was made to pass before him. The place suited Elijah's frame of mind at this time: it was solitary, it was wild, it was in a measure sacred: it reminded him of the law which he had seen Israel break, and Moses in whose faithful steps he had trodden; of the thunder of that same Sinai, which in his holy indignation against sin, he, perhaps, wished to see burst forth against Jezebel and the enemies of God. He lodges in this cave; and behold the word of the Lord came to him there. “And the Lord said unto him, What dost thou here, Elijah?” What a question that, to a man out of the way of duty! It is like that question to the first man that sinned, “Adam, where art thou?” Or like that to the first murderer, “Where is Abel thy brother?” Elijah's answer is not satisfactory; it is the language of petulance, of self-justification, of murmuring complaint: for he said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” To this peevish complaint the answer is, “Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.” Then followed the manifestation of the Lord to Elijah, which is to be our second consideration.

We now see *the occasion*, the train of circumstances, which led to this manifestation. The prophet, you have seen, was not acting up to his former professions, his principles, and his privileges: he was failing through fear; he was out of the way of duty; he was not trusting God as he ought: he was wishing for death rather than life; though not in that noble spirit in which St. Paul felt a desire to “depart and to be with Christ, which is far better;” but because he was tired of suffering, weary of trials, afraid of trouble and persecution. He had been wandering about in discomfort; he had taken up his lodging in this cave in Horeb, as though he had done with men, and done with life; he had almost accused God of neglecting him, and leaving him by himself. And here, while we see the sinful infirmities of Elijah, do none of us see a glass to shew

us yet greater infirmities of our own? Have none of us been in situations, and states of mind, in which we ought to hear the question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" thrill through the very conscience? When you were shrinking from plain duty, afraid of that angry trial, when you fled from a difficult service, when you were weary and disgusted with life, when you wished yourself among the dead (nay, start not, for some of you have wished it ere now; it is God's mercy that he did not take you at your word)—then, when you justified yourself before God, complained of hard usage, dwelt with complacency on your services—then your state of mind very much resembled that of Elijah's. Many a one who has never resembled Elijah in faith and boldness for God, has often resembled the faulty part of his character. Many an unconverted man, amid all his gaiety, has moments of disgust and chagrin; his pride makes him fancy himself neglected, both of God and of man; he is satiated with variety; he is averse from active duties; he thinks he would like to die, though he thinks little of what it is to die, and how unprepared he is to find that "to die is gain."

We see already that the subject may suit ourselves: let us then go on with the second part. Elijah is ordered to go forth from his cave, and not to make that his lodging or abode, but to stand upon the mount before the Lord. "And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord." How fearful this scene! What a display of the power of God, "wind and storm fulfilling his word!" How easy, evidently, how easy to him, to rend mountains to their base, and to break the rocks in pieces! Surely, as the whirlwind arose in its fury, and swept by the prophet, while fragments from the mountains, and masses from the rocks, scattered in wild confusion around, and told his power, the prophet must have thought, "The Lord is come in majesty and judgment to avenge his servant." It is thus that the ruin will be hurled at His foes, when he utters his voice of thunder. "But the Lord was not in the wind."

The prophet is lost in wonder at this; when lo, "after the wind an earthquake." No words can describe that scene: a hollow sound preceding; the earth heaving; the loud explosion; the mountains rocking; the wild birds shrieking. The prophet stands in silent wonder: "Surely the Lord is here?" "But the Lord was not in the earthquake."

"And after the earthquake a fire." It was thus, he might have thought with himself now—it was thus that this same mountain once burned with fire under the midst of heaven; it was thus the Lord spake to Israel out of the midst of the fire; it was thus that I saw him send fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice before the priests of Baal. "But the Lord was not in the fire."

The prophet must have now been in perplexity and astonishment: he had seen signs and tokens from the Lord, the most fearful demonstrations of his power; but his presence and voice were still wanting. "And after the fire a still small voice:" and the Lord was there. It was a voice—a small voice—a still, gentle tone, which contrasted wonderfully with the whirlwind's rush, the earthquake's shock, the fury of the fire, which had preceded. Now all was still and calm, nature was hushed into silence; the voice was gentle, soft, and mild. On this the prophet felt the presence of the Lord, wrapped his face in his mantle

in reverence, and is again questioned with that same searching question, "What doest thou here?" Elijah again makes his murmuring complaint; he is left alone of all God's servants. He is bidden now to return to the way of duty, to go and anoint Hazael and Jehu, who shall execute vengeance for God in the state: he is also to anoint Elisha to the prophetic office, who shall carry on the reformation of the Church of Israel: and he is comforted with the assurance, that though he had thought himself alone, the Lord had yet seven thousand left to Him in Israel, of Israelites indeed who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed the impious shrine.

Such was the manifestation of God to Elijah, which seems to have been intended to teach him chiefly the great lesson, that God loves to manifest himself to his people in the way of grace and mildness. Elijah's spirit at this time was too exasperated and embittered: the whirlwind and the earthquake seemed congenial to his spirit; the fire without, seemed to have a fellow feeling with the fiery zeal that was burning within his bosom. But he was thus taught, that God rather loves to come in the still small voice of expostulation, gentle persuasion, and heavenly consolation. He is instructed to imitate this godlike temper, to remember that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, and henceforth to cultivate a more gentle, gracious, and persuasive disposition.

Another lesson for him probably, was, God's displeasure, not only against Israel's sin, but against this his servant, now out of the way of duty. And hence the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, to strike awe into his soul; and then the still small voice of encouragement and consolation.

There is after all, and above all, intended a lesson of great grace; that though the whirlwind sweeps around him, though the earth quaked beneath his feet, though the fire burst forth from the caves and crevices of the earth, yet the Lord comes to Elijah, not in this tremendous visitation, but in the still small voice. He has the terrors of judgment reserved for his enemies; he has the still small voice of mercy for all his faithful people.

Let us now consider our third part, **THE LESSONS FROM THIS SUBJECT TO OURSELVES UNDER THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION.**

I begin with *the man who has resembled the prophet in his failings, but not in his excellences*: you, I mean, who have been out of the way of duty; discontented, murmuring, self-justifying: see the lesson sent you this evening on this subject. The Lord often takes such as you, as if on Sinai where the law was given, and there begins with shewing the guilt of sin, the curse of death, the eternal wrath and woe which it deserves. Then oftentimes, at his bidding, the scenes of your past life come in terrible array before the mind: then the thunders of the law threaten; the earth burns beneath your feet, your vain confidence gives way, you have no firm footing to stand on; your righteousness you discover to be but filthy rags, your hopes mere phantoms, your expectations of safety mere shadows. The terrors of hell get hold upon you, the fiery wrath of God seems ready to burst forth, and the question is felt, "Who can dwell amidst everlasting burnings?" There are some, who in the process of conversion, and in preparation for conversion, have terrible alarms from conscience, a most fearful looking-for of judgment, dismay, and trepidation, arising from a sense of the tremendous power and majesty of God, against whom they have dared to com-



mit sin. And yet, all this might take place without true conversion resulting. Many are frightened at times about religion, who never are converted into its experience. But, brethren, after all, if there come then, the still small voice, the Saviour's voice of gentleness and mercy, the offers of his grace, the promises of his Spirit, the doctrines of his salvation, distilling on the soul, like the gentle dew on the tender grass—if the Holy Spirit bring its message of mercy and of love home with power to the heart—then it is wonderful how soon the pride which struggled against the storm, and only drew its mantle more closely around, becomes softened and melted by the mild beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Now, is it thus, you who are out of the way of duty? Do you hear the gentle voice of mercy, which addresses you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? He came not on the wings of the wind; no earthquake announced the birth of the Prince of Peace: no lightning flashed about his manger: but the angelic voice announced “good-will to men:” a star, with its mild beams, lighted the shepherds to his lowly birth-place; a gentle virgin was his mother. Mark his character, as described in prophecy. “He shall not cry, nor lift up his voice; a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench:” his words were gracious words; he was meek and lowly in heart. Mark his patience under privations, the greatest ever offered to man: observe his forgiveness to his enemies: hear his mild expostulations with those who would not come, who will not come to him, that they might have life. See him weeping over the impenitent city, Jerusalem: hear his dying prayer on his cross for his murderers: and then say, can we refuse the invitations of such a Saviour? For mark how he still invites you: you have witnessed judgments ere now, which display his power; you know he might come to you in the thunders of judgment, and in the fires of indignation; but he loves rather, even to this very day, he loves rather to come in the still small voice of entreaty and affectionate persuasion. He sends his ministers among you: and though in the discharge of our duty, we are to tell you of the law broken, of God offended, of hell deserved, of death impending, yet we would never leave you thus: our main theme is the Gospel of peace, the message of salvation, the offer of eternal life, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sinner, at once hardened and careless, what sayest thou to this? What! will not such pity as this touch thine hard heart? Only yield to God's entreaties, enter into his thoughts of love towards you; consent to his gracious plan; believe in the love of God towards you in Christ Jesus, and be saved.

Such is one lesson for one class of persons that may be present, to be derived from this subject.

Again, the subject also brings a lesson to *true and faithful Christians, who may yet be at present not acting up to their former spirit, but falling back into a wrong and perverse temper of mind*. Let none say, “There is no danger of this:” if Elijah fell back, may not you? Nay, do we not find in Scripture, that believers have lamentably failed in the very graces, for which they were once the most distinguished? You have all heard of the patience of Job; and you may hear, and read also, of the impatience of Job. Abraham was the father of the faithful; and yet there were occasions in Abraham's life in which he acted unfaithfully. Moses was the meekest of men; yet he spoke once, very

unadvisedly with his lips. Who confessed Christ more nobly than Peter; and who more shamefully denied him? In fact, if any grace has ever appeared in any of you, in a very eminent manner, the enmity of Satan is moved, and he will, if he can, excite you to pride and self-confidence, respecting that very grace. Then he will send you very strong temptations, so that unless you watch and pray, you may sadly fall. And this may have been the case with some very recently; it may be even their state of mind at the present time: in a very unsatisfactory and restless state of mind; with no rejoicings in God, no delight, as once, in his service; they may be brooding over real or fancied injuries and privations, angry with an ungodly world, desponding for the state of the Church of Christ, fancying they are left almost alone and comfortless in the world, and almost longing for the wilderness, the cave, the solitary place, or even speedy death. Christian, what dost thou here in this state of mind? How shall I help to restore thee to duty, to peace, and a comfortable state of mind? Is it by the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire; by telling thee of God's displeasure with a godless world, and also with thy present declensions from him? I come rather, as my Lord bids me, and as the example before us, with the still small voice, which, if a believer indeed, thou hast already heard in other and happier days. I am to ask, "What dost thou here? Is this the way of duty?" I am to urge thee to turn again to thy rest, to go back to active service; to use God's messages of mercy to thyself, to use kindness, and mercy, and all mild persuasive arts, recommended by the Gospel of peace. Let it be with you, as it is always with backsliders truly returned to God, a greater tenderness and gratitude filling the soul, a livelier sense of sin penetrating the spirit, a stronger and more simple faith pervading the heart, a closer and more humble walk with God characterizing the life.

Let this subject next speak a word to *any who may be excessively discouraged at the aspect of the times*. There are some who think that we at this day are almost entering another golden age of liberty, of intellect far surpassing in wisdom any of our forefathers, of liberality, and even of religious improvement. There are, at the same time, others, who think our liberty is fast degenerating into licentiousness, our intellectual wisdom into practical folly, our liberality into infidelity; and as to religious improvements we scarcely see our tokens as we once did. Such as those, to whom I now speak, are tempted almost to despond in activity, to forsake the foundering vessel, and to betake themselves to the solitary rock, to mourn in secret. "How are the faithful minished from among the children of men!" But, if in this spirit, we must hear the question, "What dost thou here Elijah? Is this the post of duty?" If times are bad, it is every Christian's duty to try to mend them: we want our Elijahs in the midst of the busy stir of men. If a man has Scriptural principle, now let him express it firmly, yet meekly, with John the Baptist's boldness, and with John the Evangelist's love, for Christ and for his cause. Let each return to practical duties, and carry them out in Christian life, and God will not be wanting to his Church: though an Elijah may be removed, his mantle shall fall with a double portion of the Spirit upon Elisha.

Therefore let no pious Christian despair, despair cuts the very nerves of effort; fear paralyzes all exertion. If the enemies of truth and righteousness are active, let us be active also, but in a better spirit, and depending on a better

strength. And let not pious Christians think they stand alone in the world; the Lord is with them; and if he is with them, who can effectually be against them? Oh, he has still his secret ones, whether we know them or not; there are still more than seven thousand who will not bow their knee to the god of this world. And even if the ungodly are at times more numerous, the pious servants of God have a weight of influence which ungodliness never can possess.

The same subject would bring a word to those in that other state of mind, who are expecting the world to be regenerated, (I believe they use the very word, though it is a Scriptural word)—to be regenerated by principles which hardly pretend to be derived from revelation—who talk of the Scripture as suited only to the Jew, who think they have found some new remedy for the moral misery of men. Such may see the whirlwind scatter ruin and desolation around, they may see the foundations of the earth put out of course; they may have the fire of intellect and eloquence; but remember the Lord was not in the whirlwind, in the earthquake, and in the fire. God's method for improving man, for regenerating sinners, for regenerating the world, if the world is to be regenerated—God's method is, the still small voice of revealed truth: if this is heard and heeded, if this penetrates the hearts and influences the lives of individuals, if this breathes in the spirit and character of a country, then those individuals are happy, that country is blessed. But if men will not hear this still small voice, then comes impending wrath—the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire in desolating judgments.

*Sinners, unconverted sinners*, I have hardly hinted at that thought which our subject may yet bring home, because I would rather win you by the voice of mercy: but will it not be thus in the end with them who persist in impenitence and sin? Now is indeed the time for the still small voice, which speaks to you by ministers, which breathes in the very air of the gentle Sabbath as often as it comes round, which whispers continually in your conscience, which winds round and round the heart, as if anxious to find a place of admittance. Then it speaks to you in sickness and pain, in the painful feeling of declining health, in the pallid countenance; nature seems to second the call of nature's God, and bids you accept the Gospel, that still small voice of mercy which tells of a helper in sickness and sorrow, of a strength in weakness, of a joy full of immortality even in death itself. Some of you have heard that voice in other ways: the loss of a beloved friend caused you to hear that still small voice which speaks to you of Christ and his consolation: your trials in business might have had this same meaning: the instruction of pious parents, with their fervent prayers, all desire that you should hear and attend to this voice. And yet, brethren, I say, here you are unconverted and impenitent still. Oh, I can tell you of judgments to come if you will continue such: but I almost shrink from the painful duty; I linger still, in hopes that you will even yet hear this still small voice of mercy and of peace. It still speaks of pardon and salvation; it still offers all the love of Christ to sinners, and all the blessings which he has procured. It speaks from that piercing look from his mild eye; it invites you to the joy of having his Father for your Father; it implores your pity for that precious soul, which once lost, can never, never, be brought back into life again. "Why will ye die?" And if still proud and impenitent, and determined to go away careless as you came, then, I would address you again and again,

if the opportunity be found. I would give you no rest in your sins until you accept of Christ and his salvation. I would come, if I could, in some future moment, when trouble and affliction may have somewhat softened that proud spirit: but do not trust to opportunities which we may never see; but "behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

But if you will not hear it, if any here will live and die impenitent, ungodly persons, then there must come the whirlwind of desolation, sweeping away your hope, with all its plans and excuses, as with the besom of destruction. The earth will quake to its very centre, and in vain will you then call to the mountains and the rocks to cover you from the face of the Lamb; and then, too, will be the fire which never shall be quenched, the lake of brimstone, the worm that never dieth. And will there be no still small voice of mercy then? There will for some; there will for all who now repent and believe the Gospel. You have many a message of mercy now on earth, in that still small voice of God, in his word, and in his grace, speaking home to the heart: and in that day, amid the tremendous terrors of judgment for the enemies of God, for you there will be a voice, soft, gracious, penetrating, saying, "Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But no such voice as that will ever speak peace to the lost; "Depart from me, ye cursed, I know ye not," shall be their sentence.

But choose now that better part. My last words this evening must be again and again the message of grace: I almost thought that I had lost it. I was almost afraid that some to whom I have preached this evening would be among the lost for eternity. My God says, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" (this is the still small voice again) "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Therefore in the spirit of our God's own words, "Turn ye, turn ye," I ask, "why will ye die?" Hear yet the voice of mercy; be persuaded yet to repent; open your heart to receive Christ in his offers of mercy; and go and realize through him, and through the blessed influences of his Holy Spirit—go and realize for yourself all the joys of salvation, and all that peace which passeth understanding.



## THE SPIRITUAL SLAVERY OF MAN

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REV. T. BINNEY.

KING'S WEIGH HOUSE CHAPEL, AUGUST 1, 1834.

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“ If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”—JOHN, viii. 36

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It is unnecessary to enter into any explanation of the occasion of our present service. I observe that the most of you are those that were here this morning ; and you are aware that we assemble in this place to-day, to celebrate that great act, to which reference has been already made, by which eight hundred thousand of our fellow beings in our West India Colonies, hitherto held in unjust and degrading bondage, enter upon a new state of liberty and enjoyment. The subject was largely adverted to this morning, and it is not my intention to go over that ground again. Indeed, after two or three introductory observations, I wish almost to lose sight of the West India slaves altogether, and I wish to come to another sort of slavery ; I wish to come to another subject nearer home ; and I desire, by the help of God, which I humbly implore, and desire you to implore for me, to close the services of this day, by seeking some spiritual improvement, some practical advantage, by taking the subject of the emancipation of the slaves, and turning it to ourselves, to our spiritual condition with respect to sin, and whether we have realized the beautiful representation of the text—“ If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

I mentioned that I should do this after two or three introductory observations. I do not wish to damp the joy that pervaded the assembly this morning, and that I doubt not is felt now by many hearts, in which I sympathize myself, and which I wish to cherish ; but I think it right to state, that there are two or three circumstances which very materially moderate our joy and feeling to-day. It is proper to remember, that the great mass of the slaves do not enter to-day upon absolute freedom : they enter upon a middle and a mitigated state ; the provision is, that they are to enter on a state of apprenticeship—a sort of middle state, between absolute slavery and absolute freedom. I give no opinion, but I merely state the fact. In one or two of the Colonies, however, they have gone further than the Act itself ; in Antigua, especially, where they do not enter upon the apprenticeship state, but to-day they enter upon full, unfettered, perfect liberty : and in the Island of Antigua, according to account, this day is to be set apart, on which all the churches and chapels are to be opened, and the service of God performed, for the purpose of expressing the high joy of the population who enter on absolute freedom. With respect to the others, they enter on a

middle state ; but there is reason to believe that, as they have the power to go further than the Act at present positively demands, the local legislatures, in a very little time, will abolish the apprenticeship state. The apprenticeship state, according to the law, is to continue for six years ; but it is expected it will be almost universally done away with before that time. However, the circumstance of its existence does a little moderate the enthusiasm into which we are apt to fall.

Then again, another circumstance is, that while we rejoice that England hath wiped the blot from her forehead which so long burned there, while we rejoice that our eight hundred thousand slaves are emancipated thus far, oh, brethren, we are not to forget that other Christian governments hold in absolute and most degrading vassalage, a far greater number. We are not to forget, that though *we* have done away with slavery, slavery still exists to a very great extent, and that in America, and the Brazils, the French, and the Spanish, and Portuguese possessions, there are more than five millions of slaves. We have emancipated not one million ; but there are slaves existing at this moment, men and women like yourselves, yet the property—the *goods and chattels* of others ; aye, and of those who call themselves Christians. There are more than five millions existing at this time. Now we are to think of that, and we are to think that our duty as to slaves is not yet done ; and that we are to feel, English men and English women, and English fathers and mothers, that they must feel that their work is not yet done, that their opposition to slavery is not yet to cease, but that we are, by all legitimate means, to influence other nations, and to have the blot destroyed from the face of the earth.

Another circumstance is, that the slave trade, with all its horrors, with all the horrors of the middle passage, with all these horrors increased from the individuals engaged in it being watched and overlooked, and in danger of being detected, that the slave-trade exists to a very great extent ; that though we have done away with it legally since 1807, other Christian nations and governments still sanction it ; and that it is accounted, that for the last seven years eighty thousand slaves annually have been carried across the Atlantic in the slave trade. I will not go into the horrors, with which you are already familiar, connected with that accursed and diabolic traffic ; but only think that it exists ! Realize it. There are men like yourselves at this moment engaged in it ; there are ships this moment, under the eye of heaven, wafted by the breath of heaven, engaged in it ; and in these, numbers of individuals that are to be sold for slaves, are thus brought together, and deprived of their liberty, and deprived of many of the necessities of life ; they frequently die under the various horrors which they have to suffer : and that all this is going on at this moment ! We therefore feel our work is not yet done in many respects, and we should feel that there is mingled with all the joy and enthusiasm of this day, a determination to carry on the principle of opposition to slavery, which has operated so far, and produced to-day so much.

Now, then, after having adverted to these circumstances, let me bring you to the subject before us ; let me beseech your serious and devout attention, while we endeavour to turn the circumstances of this day to some spiritual advantage to ourselves. “ If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

I shall attempt, in the first place, to illustrate the passage, and, in the second

place, according as your time may permit, endeavour to draw a few practical conclusions from it.

In attempting to ILLUSTRATE THE PASSAGE, I shall endeavour to make the observations as brief and plain as I can. After the very long service of this morning, it would not, I am sure, be just to make a long demand upon your attention or your strength : and I shall endeavour, therefore, in a few very brief remarks, to illustrate this representation.

I call your attention, in the first place, to *the affecting representation which God's word gives of the condition of men as sinners*. "If the Son shall make you free;"—then there is a necessity for that; the passage goes on the supposition that freedom is required; and I beg to direct you to that particular idea. The book before us is a revelation from God: the idea of a revelation goes on the supposition that there is something wanting; we want some information, and I dare say nobody will deny that. I never heard of any body complaining that we know too much, that we gather too much information of ourselves, and God, without the Bible. It comes to reveal God to man, and it comes to reveal man to himself; and it gives us an affecting representation of our condition as sinners; and the more we consider that, brethren, the more we find that representation corroborated by our consciences.

Now I do not intend this evening to go into all the figures, and all the strong representations of Scripture; but I wish to keep to this one idea of bondage, of *slavery*; that is one of the figures employed to represent the condition of sinners. And I would observe, that the Scriptures use it in two senses—two senses perfectly distinguishable from each other. The idea of bondage or slavery, is employed to represent our relation to God as sinners, and also the moral and spiritual condition of our nature.

In *our relation to God as sinners*, I mean the figure of bondage is employed in this way: sinners have violated that law which is the rule of God's moral administration; and because the sinner has violated that law, the command of the law is upon him; the hand of justice is upon him; justice claims him, and justice claims the penalty: and he is represented as a convicted criminal; as a man upon whom the verdict is passed, and he is brought in guilty; and he has not, in consequence, the liberty of the loyal subject, but is considered as in chains, or prison, or bondage; while, because the law has a claim upon him, he is represented in Scripture as shut up, and in bondage, from his moral relation to God as a sinner.

The other idea is, with respect to *his moral and spiritual condition*. He is represented as enslaved, and as the victim and rebel of sin, lust, passion, and various affections of the mind, which are opposed to God. And he is represented also, in the most awful and appalling manner, as being ruled over, domineered over; being in bondage, and under the controul of great and wicked diabolic intelligences, who reign in the children of disobedience, and under whose power the world is represented as lying. Now this is a painful representation, but it is true; and the more you examine the character and conduct of sinners, the more you will see these fearful images realized in their experience. It is true the spiritual slavery may differ very much: there are some persons who have practised upon them, and who practise upon others, a sort of splendid imposi-

tion: the chains by which they are enslaved are gilded; the tyrants who tyrannize over them, put on the appearance of virtue: and thus men of ambition, and men of strong mental passions, who are in chains from various degrading vices, do not know themselves. they do not suspect themselves. to be in slavery: and yet they are they are sinners; and these intellectual passions are reigning over them, which are as abhorrent to God, as the most gross and brutal passion can be in its strongest manifestation. But there are others who seem to be the slaves of the lowest and most degrading appetites of our nature. These representations are sufficient to shew the figure, and the bearing of that figure of Scripture upon our condition.

But let us go to the second thing; and let us go directly from one extreme to another. We will take up the contrast. Scripture gives us a contrast, and points out that when an individual has undergone a certain process, he becomes completely another man: and it represents a *liberty* as well as bondage, a freedom as well as a slavery; and gives a higher representation of the character of man: and this bears a parallelism to that slavery which we have already detailed. Thus, with respect to the moral relation to God, the law having its hand upon the man, the man being bound, concluded as in a prison, not having the liberty of the legal subject to do what he pleases, but the law having a claim and demand on him, the representation of Scripture is, that the law takes off its hand, the man is loosened, and he comes forth to the liberty of the child of God; he is no longer a slave, but a free man. And we have the representation that sin is pardoned, absolved, and entirely forgotten; that the man is no longer viewed by God as a sinner, but as if he were righteous; that the divine eye falling upon that man, who, before, was represented as having the hand of the law upon him, now looks on him with complacency, and beholds him as if he were righteous; and instead of condemning him at the bar because he has been a convicted offender, it pronounces openly and publicly, that he should be treated as if he were just; that though he cannot fulfil the law, he is to be looked upon as if he had. And thus the man no longer feels the law has its hand upon him; but that he is delivered from the law, and is a child of God, rejoicing in his liberty.

With respect to the other part, of the bondage and the slavery, and the man being under the power of the devil, of lust and passion, and mental affections, and depraved intellect or heart, all this has been perfectly restored: moral harmony is restored, no longer passion clashing with passion, or passion with judgment; no longer the intellect against the heart, or the heart against the intellect; no longer the man delights in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life: now the man is represented as delighting in God and in God's holiness, and being made like God, and having the image of God impressed upon him: and all this in devotion of himself to God in the way of a new and heavenly obedience. So that the man is no longer a slave, but he is free; and as he once gave up his members servants of unrighteousness, he yields himself to God, and yields himself as a servant of holiness. That is the true representation: and we have seen and know individuals in which both cases have been represented in them successively. It is what is taking place every day in the heart and character.

Now we come to the third thing, *how this emancipation is effected*; by what



means it is that these splendid results are realized ; that is the next thing. Of course some means must be employed ; the thing is evidently of such a nature that it could not effect itself. Well, there are means adequate, appropriate, consistent with the character of God, required by the necessity of man. Now, brethren, observe ; bondage may be a matter of justice or a matter of usurpation. An individual may be bound, and completely under the power of another as a matter of justice or a matter of usurpation. Then for the liberty to effect freedom in these two cases, when the bondage is a matter of justice, it must be effected by a righteous arrangement ; when it is a matter of usurpation, it may be effected by positive power and direct force. I think that both of these observations apply to the case before us. We mean to shew you, that while there is a righteous arrangement for seeking freedom where the bondage is a matter of justice, and while there is a direct operation of power, for the effecting the freedom where the bondage is matter of usurpation ; so in both cases, there is something in the mind, something in the subject, appropriately leading to a sympathy and an exertion on the part of the individual himself ; because the subjects in which the operation is to be made are moral and rational, and therefore the means are moral and rational, and call forth the exercise of the faculties in the individual.

With respect then to the bondage, *as matter of justice*, I mean to say, that is the case with the sinner, considered in his relation to God. The law has a righteous demand upon him ; it has its hand righteously upon him ; the law just and good, which cannot be violated. Therefore we find, that in treating of that sort of bondage, there is primarily a reference in Scripture to the righteous arrangement ; to the great consideration which is offered to the Moral Governor of that law, which in a certain sense is superior to the Governor himself. And so the law which God hath consented to honour and observe, the law is the rule to God as well as to man. And hence we find there a righteous arrangement which takes notice of that ; hence we find, that a price, a ransom, a consideration, is perpetually represented in Scripture, the atoning all-meritorious death of the Son of God who appeared in the flesh. I but refer to the act, in the texts, such as that “ He gave his life a ransom for many.” That Christ hath redeemed us ; bought us with his blood ; “ Ye are bought with a price ;” “ ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ;” “ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ;” Christ is a ransom to be manifested in due time.

There are two words used in the original Scriptures for the idea of a ransom : the one signifies a ransom that may consist of money ; the other signifies a corresponding ransom. Supposing an individual slave held in righteous bondage is to be delivered, and ransom paid, one word signifies, that money may be paid, and that he may be ransomed ; but the other word signifies a corresponding ransom—life for life. And hence it is, that though “ for a righteous man some would even dare to die, God hath commended his love towards us, in that while we were sinners Christ *died* for us.” A corresponding ransom ; life for life : and from the divinity of his nature, sufficient for the delivery of all who believe on him. That is the righteous arrangement to honour the law ; the upholding the principles of the law, and the consistency of the Moral Adminis-

trator in his character, in the administration of the law. That is the righteous arrangement by which man is delivered from the bondage, which is required by justice.

And with respect to the mode of *usurpation*: Sin and Satan are usurpers; man was made for God, not for sin; man was made for God, not for himself; man's heart and intellect were made to be filled with truth, not with error; with purity and love, affection to the great Supreme, not to the creature. Therefore there is a positive operation of mind; God comes down upon men's hearts in all the might of his Spirit; in all the omnipotence of that Spirit he comes down upon a man's heart, re-creates him, renews him, gives forth the word again which he gave at the creation, "Let there be light," and there is light. He creates him afresh by the operation of his Spirit, and that is the application of that emancipation from slavery, the slavery of sin.

But these are done in consistency with our rational nature. And hence there is something to be observed in the *mind* of man. A mere pecuniary transaction is not a proper illustration, because it is a moral transaction between God and us. If the debtor has the debt paid, the debtor is free, whatever the moral state of his mind. But that is not a proper illustration, because this is a moral transaction; and, therefore, the ransom being paid, the mind of the individual must be brought to harmonize with the mind of God; and the mind operating, and the mind operated upon, must be brought to meet together upon the same points. There are three stages in the process of the delivery from that bondage, which is a matter of justice. The first is, the offended Moral Governor admitting an arrangement at all; it is a matter of grace entirely; he is under no obligation to admit an arrangement at all: he may act on the simple principle of law; and if he does so, he cannot admit an arrangement. But he admits an arrangement; that is the first step. The second step is, that this arrangement being effected, is acknowledged by him, accepted by him, and then published to the individuals concerned, that they may know that their loss will henceforth be their own; that they may know that there is an arrangement effected, and that they may place their confidence in it. Then the third is, repentance, and faith in the means. And these results harmonizing with the mind whom they have offended, coming with a confidence and affection, and reposing on that arrangement; God meeting with man, man meeting with God, each rejoicing together over the one sacrifice; God beholding with pleasure the prostrate and penitent believer, and the believer rejoicing in the light of God's countenance.

This transaction is not a mere pecuniary transaction; the debt cannot be paid unless there is a moral transaction; and therefore there is the operation of their *minds*; coming to God by penitence and faith, and harmonizing with the arrangement of God. So with respect to the operation of the Spirit on man's heart; that is carried on by means, and completed by means; for the same principle of faith which justifies, also sanctifies. And henceforth that man lives by faith, walks by faith; and faith leads him to accept the offered Deliverer, and frees him from the bondage of corruption; and by faith he lives, and walks, and brings forth all righteousness. By faith he receives the Spirit in answer to prayer. And the operation is not a mere mechanical impulse; it is a rational impulse upon the mind, leading the man to good, and voluntary holy obedience. God then it is, that all this glorious work is effected by, the

deliverance of the soul from bondage which is just bondage, and from the bondage which is usurpation.

I do not know whether we might not illustrate the matter from the ancient people of God. Take the supposition that they were all liable to death justly; and that they were unrighteously held in bondage: there you have bondage justly, and bondage by usurpation. To meet the first, their liability to death, God provides the passover; he directs the blood to be taken and sprinkled. There is the arrangement on the part of God. But it must be sprinkled; the man must attend to the arrangement; and he must sympathize and harmonize with the mind of God. He does that, and is freed from death. They are held in bondage by positive usurpation. God comes with all the power of his might upon the individuals, and makes them terrified and afraid; and thus by his miraculous operations he opens a way to escape; but he does not lift them up, and carry them through the air. He has prepared a way, and by faith they go forth and are led by the power of God, and the operation of their moral and physical affections. Thus it is, brethren, that God is glorified in the power and omnipotence of his grace, and man is upheld in his rational and responsible character.

In the last place we observe *the perfection and reality of the Gospel*. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." I do not dwell upon this, except further to state, that with respect to the first, I apprehend, that the freedom from the bondage by the ransom is so complete in every view of Scripture, that it will never be revoked. The act will never be revoked; the son and child will be the son and child for ever: he shall be free indeed; delivered indeed; pardoned indeed; justified indeed; the righteousness of God in him. And then with respect to the other, the highest liberty, the liberty of a rational and moral nature, freedom from the most degrading bondage; this is liberty indeed, and God when he gives the one liberty, always gives the other. You may emancipate the slave, and you may give him freedom; but you cannot give him the character and virtues of a freeman; he may still, in his state of emancipation, carry with him the degrading vices of the slave; but God when he makes you free also operates upon the nature and character, and gives the virtues of the freeman too; and thus we are free *indeed*.

You easily perceive, that I have contented myself, designedly, with mere outlines of the subject; and we come now to occupy a few minutes more with three or four practical observations, or inferences drawn from the subject. And now, brethren, let us come to a serious and practical conclusion of the whole matter.

And, in the first place, you are rejoicing to-day in the liberty of the slave; and you do well: it is a legitimate subject of gladness and of gratulation. Far from me, and from my friends, be the heart that cannot sympathize, the mind that will not rejoice. We know not how far the spirits of the wise and the virtuous that are departed may know of the transactions of earth; or we could conceive of some patriots and legislators who lived for freedom, and who lived for this freedom, rejoicing on this day in the subject over which we rejoice. We know not whether angels have time from the lofty themes and subjects of a spiritual nature, to give a thought and a feeling to what is merely

secular; or they perhaps may rejoice over that with which we rejoice to-day. but this we know, that angels and spirits that are blessed in the presence of God, and rejoice to do his will, and rejoice in the fulfilment of his designs, that they rejoice over the spiritual emancipation of one sinner that repenteth. We know not what might excite their curiosity, whether they think about the transactions to-day occurring in our Colonies; we know not whether they have time or thought for that; but we know something more interesting to ourselves: we know that if there be a sinner here who will come with penitence and faith to the ransom, come and accept of God's mercy, come and give himself up to God that he might be free from his sins, angels will rejoice over that man. "Verily I say unto you, that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Now you rejoice, as I have said, and you do well; but how dreadful to think, that while you are rejoicing over the freedom of the slaves, you are slaves yourselves. Some of you are in a more degrading bondage; a bondage, that unless God's mercy interfere, and be accepted by you, will never terminate. The slave in his most degraded condition, had often his hope fixed on the hour of death; he knew there would be a time when his ear would be deaf to the lash of the driver; he knew there was a time when his eye would be closed against the scene of excruciation and agony; but if you continue in your slavery, if you go on and die impenitent, you will carry your slavery with you for ever, and you will be the subject of that degrading bondage of the power of sin operating on the intellect and moral nature for ever and ever. It is painful to think, that some of you may be rejoicing over the liberty of the slave, and are not sensible of your own degradation. Has Christ made you free? Have you thought of this freedom? Oh, one may suppose that angels may weep, if they can weep, when perhaps in various assemblies of men they had looked upon a man with fascinating eloquence, powerful eloquence, warm enthusiasm, advocating the cause of the oppressed and bound slave, and yet himself the slave of his passions and his sins. And so it may be now; tears are dropping from your eyes; you are rejoicing over the physical emancipation of some, and you are neglecting the spiritual degradation of yourselves. Perhaps you do not go with the mind of the preacher, or the representations of Scripture; perhaps some of you are on the point of saying to the preacher, We never were in bondage, and do not feel the bondage. You are ready to say, with the individuals in the context, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Just like the individuals before us. Abraham's seed had never been in bondage! Why God foretold to Abraham that they should be in bondage: they *were* in bondage at the very time when they spoke; and afterwards they confessed it when they had another purpose to serve; they said "We have no king but Cæsar." So, indeed, some of you may be talking of your liberty, while you are slaves to lust and to sin. Then let us be affected by this, and humble ourselves deeply before God, on account of this slavery, and bondage, and degradation of our nature.

In the second place; oh, let your minds be affected by the splendour of that ransom which hath been paid for your freedom. We talk about the twenty millions that we have given for the liberty of the slave; we talk about the splendour of the act, and the greatness of the sacrifice; a sacrifice which is



never felt. "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." He loved you, and gave himself for you; a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Oh, brethren, be affected by this; "He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon himself the form of a servant, and appeared in the likeness of man, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" having died "the just for the unjust," to "redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Oh, brethren, if our hearts were not so hard, they would be melted by the consideration of a ransom like this. I will not enter into all the objections which some of you might make (and I can imagine many), I want rather to give you the doctrine of Scripture. I know some of you might talk about this ransom price interfering with the freeness of God's mercy. No, brethren, it illustrates that freeness; for the ransom is not our paying, but provided by the free manifestation of the mercy of God in Christ. We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

I observe, in the next place, that if you profess, as some of you do, to be the subjects of God's delivering mercy, and to be free from the bondage of justice, see that you walk worthy of that profession; see that you exhibit your conduct and character freed from the usurpation of sin. Read attentively the chapter we read at the commencement of the service; I commend it to every believer; read over the sixth chapter of the Romans, and observe how the Apostle exhorts, that, as we are the subjects of God's grace, and delivered from the law, it becomes us to live devoted to God; and that as we had once given up ourselves to the service of sin, so now we yield ourselves entirely to God. Brethren, ye are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but we are debtors to live after the Spirit; to be spiritual in mind and person. Oh, for that faith, and the influence of that holy principle, which will enable us to say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free." This ought to be the feeling and the character of every professing man.

Oh, brethren, if you are dreaming of your freedom, dreaming you are justified, and pardoned, and delivered, and if you are deceiving yourselves by hypocrisy and formality, how dreadful will be the discovery that it was all a dream. Suppose that all the palpitations of the heart, all the goings forth of the imagination, all the anticipation of that entrance on freedom which hath filled the breasts of the slaves were to be disappointed, and they found they had been deceived; what a tremendous revolution would there be in their feelings! But that would be nothing to a man deceiving himself by a name to live, while he is dead; professing to be free by the mercy of God, and yet not free by the Spirit of holiness; when he discovers he hath never known the liberty of Christ, hath never known him; and when he saith, "Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name done many wonderful works?" he will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

Yet, in the next place, let us rejoice in what is to come. You may class two great events together: there are two events yet future which we may associate. We rejoice that the time is to come when the whole world is to be emancipated from sin; when Christ's kingdom shall come universally; when all shall be

taught of God ; when Christ shall reign in every nation, and be acknowledged of all nations ; and when every thing that oppresses individual nations or kindreds shall perish ; slavery and idolatry shall perish ; when antichristian worship shall perish, and when the prophecy shall be fulfilled ; when all rejoicing in Christ, and all bearing the image of Christ, and when the whole world of nature is happy and harmonious ; when God shall rejoice over it all, and Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. And there is another event ; when nature, subject to the curse, when the creation now under bondage, groaning in pain, shall be delivered from that bondage ; when Christ shall come in his glorious power ; when all the intentions and purposes of his moral government shall be complete ; when man shall be raised from the dead by the power and operation of the Spirit ; when those kingdoms which sin has usurped dominion over, when death and sin shall be conquered—when these shall feel the power and operation of emancipating grace and mercy, and shall deliver up their dead ; when death and the invisible state shall deliver up their dead, and when Christ shall come, and by that power by which he is able to subdue all things to himself, shall deliver our very physical nature from bondage ; shall change our vile body, and make it like unto his glorious body ; and when the whole Church, emancipated from all intellectual, and moral, and physical bondage, shall enter on the blessedness of the beatific glory that is reserved. Let us, then, rejoice in this freedom and blessedness of God's children

Now, brethren, one word more. If we know how to value these blessed truths, and if we hope we are made free, we shall rejoice in any opportunity of communicating spiritual as well as temporal and social freedom. There will be a collection on behalf of the particular funds of the Bible Society, for presenting to each of the emancipated slaves a copy of the New Testament and the book of Psalms bound together. It is a most beautiful volume ; and the Bible Society has munificently determined that a copy shall be given to each slave. To fulfil the determination of the Bible Society will take twenty thousand pounds ; therefore we make this appeal. If you have tasted the liberty with which Christ maketh free, and “ If the Son hath made you free,” you will be happy to convey one copy at least : and carry it in your heart and recollection, and let your prayers arise to God for a blessing on that copy, and that by the reading of that copy, received from you as your gift, they may enter into a liberty, higher and holier than the liberty in which we this day rejoice.

May God in his great mercy bless these few hints. May the spirit of liberty be given to each of us, that we may be free ourselves, and desire to impart liberally of the word of life to the wants of others !

## RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN

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REV. R. W. HAMILTON.

NEW COURT CHAPEL, CAREY STREET, MAY 11, 1834.

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"Then shall I know even as also I am known."—1 CORINTHIANS, xiii. 12.

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THAT the soul of every man who has hitherto died is living still—that the souls of every generation, including hundreds of millions, still exist—is a fact which we, perhaps without any examination, readily allow. We cannot but acknowledge—at least, when particularly pressed—that this being which is given to us shall be perpetual; carried out, shall be eternally prolonged, a dawn without an eve, a race without a goal. We must further confess, that, whatever was the impression produced upon these spirits during their sojourn upon earth, never were they so conscious of what was present, so mindful of what was past, as in their actual state now. Nor shall we refuse to concede that their moral identity is unchanged, that they are the creatures of the same accountability as before, and that their present condition is linked together with their former history, as necessarily, as indissolubly.

We come, then, to this dread conclusion: that every man who ever thought, is still thinking; that every sensibility that ever felt, still feels; that every consciousness revives itself; that every memory recalls itself; that every individual who has departed this life has entered into eternity, and is still distinctly and vividly alive to all the scenes of that mortal period which is past, and of that immortal economy which has succeeded and superseded it.

But to be able to take hold of this truth, to receive an appropriate and a worthy impression of this fact, is far more difficult than its bare attestation. They who have quitted this earthly scene have scarcely left a trace of themselves behind: the arrow has flown, and the air has quickly closed upon the passage; the leaf has fallen, and is mixed with the earth around the parent tree; the rain-drop has sunk into the ocean, and is lost in its depths. Our general and lesser conceptions touching the dead is, that they are *no more*, that they are *extinct*, that they have *perished*: but, surely as ourselves now live, exercising our faculties and entertaining our emotions, these spirits, no more within our range, with a mental activity to us unknown, now muse, now revolve, now look backward, now look forward, only more intensely, because their intellectual essence is undiverted, is unencumbered, and nothing can occur to clog its operations, or to fix it in forgetfulness or indifference.

Surely there is something very solemn, quite overpowering, in this anticipation of my future being; "Then shall I know even as also I am known;"

that there will be a clearness and certainty around me, no prejudice, no distorting medium, no unsettling estimate, no tremulous light; and that this same clearness and certainty will not only shine around me, but shine through me, so that as little possible as it is for me to mistake anything will it be for others to mistake me; I can no longer wear a mask; I can no longer practise an imposition: I intuitively know, and as intuitively am known. What will be the soliloquies of a separate spirit in an eternal sphere? May such soliloquies be conceived? "In a far distant world I emerged to existence, I awoke to thought. My transition through that mysterious state of existence was as rapid as it was momentous. The change that I had foreknown by the name of death at last fell upon me: I was carried to this far-off scene. The stars have fallen from heaven, the sun is darkness, time is no longer; but I am what I was—I was what I am. I have the same instrumentality of reflection; I have the same capacity of feeling. Strange and awful as the surrounding phenomena, I am my own self." Then, brethren, we shall have reached the result, then we shall have grasped the conclusion: the fever of the world will have ceased, all its present delusions will have fled: we shall "know even as also we are known."

It is a relief, in considering that great interminable monument of our future being, in pondering that universal perception which we shall take of others, and others shall take of us, to institute such an inquiry as this: *Will Christian friends then meet—will they recognize each other?* There are many of us occupying places here who have not only a thought of the *present* and the *future*; we cannot withstand a thought of the *past*. Our fathers worshipped in *this* mountain: *here* have communed with us, in earlier or in later passages of our being, those whom we have known, and those whom we have loved. May I be permitted to say, that, in casting my eye over the present assembly, I am only struck with vacancy, bereavement, and loss; scarcely a familiar face do I see; and I know not whither to turn to find some friend of my infancy and my youth. But is there an *absolute* privation? Are those spirits of life, and of power, and of tenderness, quenched? We must think of heaven as an existing reality. We speak of it as if forgetting that it is only future to *us*. It is that which we should bring near to ourselves; for our brethren and our kinsmen, sainted and glorified in heaven have their *present* beatitudes, their *present* splendours, their *present* songs. Let us think of them, therefore, as only separated from us by a veil, and as absolutely and truly thinking and feeling as any of ourselves. But that veil will soon be torn aside; we shall soon ourselves have entered that region of spirits. Will there be those who shall be ready to welcome us? Shall there be those whom we ourselves can remember? That is not a barren speculation: it is that which surely has engaged every thinking mind and every susceptible heart. Let us attempt for a few moments to present the evidence on which we rest the credibility of the fact, that we shall know when we meet each other in the inheritance of light.

I am not opposed or insensible to evidence of rather an equivocal kind—evidence of unassisted reason and of undeciphered imagery. For when we are told that there is a demonstration of the eternal power and Godhead in the things that are seen, do we resist that demonstration? Or when we are informed that in the very instincts and in the very yearnings of the human bosom, there



is a pledge of immortality, do we tread that pledge scornfully into the dust? And let reason be however uninformed, and let nature be however uninterpreted, the barbarian and the savage have loved the tale of the blue mountains and of the shadows behind them, where their ancestral shadows are awaiting their own arrival. And is not this the very voice of the human intellect, and the very confirmation brought in aid of the doctrine by the human heart? And it is not only those who are rude, those who are the uncivilized children of the forest and of the wild, who have thought and surmised this, but those of more polished education, and more refined culture: "Oh, renowned day," exclaimed the Roman orator, "when I shall have reached the divine assemblage of those minds with which I have congenial predilections, and shall escape this untoward and uncongenial throng!" "We but depart," said the lyrist of the same nation, "to meet our Æneas, and our Tully, and our Ancus." We are shadows as well as dust.

But there are arguments which we think more conclusive than those—which are more scattered, and which lie upon the very surface of things; arguments which we seize before we enter that branch of evidence which is more direct, positive, and overwhelming.

We observe, that *the contrary conclusion implies a destruction which is quite opposite to the dealings of God with our nature.* If I do not know in heaven those whom I have known here, there must have taken place an imperfection in my mind; there must be some breach of the judgment; there must be some abridgment of my memory; there must be some failure in my mental constitution. Now, we cannot suppose that that has taken place without an immediate agency on the part of God; and thus we must suppose that God blots out some of the exercises of the mind and of the recollection. But this seems quite opposite to his ordinary dealings with us; there is no such law as destruction in his universe: there may appear to be decay, but that which is decayed is always reproduced in its own or in some foreign form: and therefore, unless there was the strongest proof that we should *not* know each other, we should argue that it was contrary to all that we might infer concerning the divine conduct, and proceeds upon the idea of mutilating and injuring the human mind, making it something inferior and unequal to what we see it now is.

But then the converse can scarcely be doubted—that, in the region of lost spirits, those who have been companions in guilt and crime, shall recognise each other, and that the scorn, and the taunt, and the defiance, shall greatly aggravate the torments of hell: so that we may easily suppose that they shall say, "Art thou become like one of us?" And if the lost spirit dreaded the thought of his five brethren being plunged into the same fiery deep, did it not involve the necessary consequence that, when so plunged, it would be within his knowledge, within the range of his intellectual sense?

Now, heaven, we generally suppose—and suppose upon scriptural evidence—is the consummation of our present happiness, differing in degree, but not in nature. And what makes us happier upon earth than mutual acquaintance? "I have no greater joy," said the beloved disciple, "than to hear that my children walk in truth:" and was that joy entirely torn from his spirit, and was there no comparable gem bound in his crown when he passed from this world of distraction and discord, to that element and that region where, like

himself, all was serenity and love? Therefore, if we have pleasure in such knowledge and recognition now, it is not a forced or a violent inference that that pleasure will be heightened and confirmed where all is happiness, because we believe all is recognition and friendship?

Besides, it is impossible to think that all will be without a history and without a name; some, we know, will be pre-eminent, will be distinguished; we shall sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of God. And will all other spirits flit before us unstoried and nameless, so that we can recollect nothing in their history and identify no association in our thoughts? Were we to adopt only this more general evidence, we should be almost obliged to adopt the conclusion that spirits meet and recognise each other in bliss, because the contrary supposition implies an imperfection of absolute enjoyment, a mutilation by the Author of the human mind of the mind itself; because the contrary supposition, that the sorrows of the lost aggravate their own misery by such knowledge, scarcely ever has been disputed; and because also likewise future happiness is but the carrying on the enlargement and perpetuity of present happiness: and because some will bear with them a name and interest, and a thousand recollections and sacred associations—so we can easily imagine that the happiness of heaven will be augmented by its not being confined to a few, but being true of all.

But let Scripture decide; for in all such cases we must have a just and humbling sense of our weakness, the limitation of our knowledge, the very little that we can seize, and define, and make our own. When David thought of his dying child, he agonized in fasting and in prayer: when that child was taken away he summoned resolution; he found encouragement: and this was the language of his song: "Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." That his head should recline on the same clod? or that his body should be devoured by the same reptile? or that he should be lodged in the same grave with him? We think far more is meant; here is an intimation of immortality, and of the communings of two spirits in that immortality. And the same remark may be made (however common the phrase) when the pious are said to die and to be "buried with their fathers." It is chilling and repulsive to think that the cemetery only is referred to, and that there is no mingling of the departed except in the dust of the sepulchre.

There are other phrases (for we shall be ready to go from a dispensation where there was much obscurity, to another which has brought light and incorruption to light)—there are many phrases in the latter portion of the Christian Scriptures, which we think, are not only allusive, but which are absolutely decisive. "Knowing," said the Apostle of the Gentiles—"Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus Christ, shall also raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." And again, he adjures those to whom he writes, "by our gathering together unto Jesus Christ." Analyze each statement, reduce it to what shape, try it by what rule you please, there seems to be a banishment of all point and of all spirit, unless you suppose that they will know each other when raised up and presented together, and gathered together, unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

To prove how disinterested was the spirit and purpose of the first Christian

teachers, they always rested their labours upon a reward: they did not deny that they contemplated a reward, and a reward full and comprehensive; but it was a reward not of this world, not of its withering palms, or its uncertain riches: it was a reward which consisted in the conversion, in the salvation, and in the glory of those spirits whom they had instrumentally rescued and saved. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy?" "That I may rejoice in the day of the Lord that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." "Look to yourselves, that ye receive a full reward." "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Now all this, surely, is confirmation strong, the confirmation of Holy Writ, that the Apostles anticipated a reward, and that that reward cannot, for a moment, be separated from the recognition of those who were the fruits of their ministry, and the seals of their zeal.

But when it is necessary to insinuate kindly and soothing solace, more distinctly and more impressively into the mind, the veil is raised, the eternal world is developed. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now, granting that the doctrine is rather assumed in Scripture than stated and illustrated, yet as all was truly implied, what testimony can be more distinct, what evidence more perfect, than that which we have now cited in your ears? When standing near the grave of Bethany, our Lord says, "Believest thou this?" and when, more directly, "Thy brother shall rise again;" was it that that brother was to be absorbed and lost in the myriads and the millions of spirits; so that the sisters who had lately laid him in the grave should see him and know him no more? But what has appeared to me a passage more completely pertinent than any other is, that in which the inspired Apostle addresses Philemon. Onesimus had wronged him, but, by a providential course, the blind had been led by a way which he knew not, and directed by the apostolical preaching, he had become "a brother beloved in the Lord." How was the wrong to be repaired, and how was the injury to be overlooked? "For perhaps," said the correspondent—"perhaps he therefore departed for a season, *that thou shouldest receive him for ever*:" which would be altogether insignificant and unsuited, unless there was in the heavenly world such a recognition as that for which we contend, where a Philemon should see his converted slave who had departed from him for a season that he might (so had Providence overruled, and grace directed it) receive him for ever.

And very frequently there are very plain mementos made in the Sacred Writings concerning those who have gone before us: and those mementos surely are that we should carry our recollections, not to the tomb, but that we

should project our thoughts and our memories into the world where all is light and all is known. "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." In their inheritance of those promises were they not to be known, or not to be remembered, by us who attain to the same inheritance? "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

It is necessary, to complete this soothing consolation, to think of this world which they inherit, and to anticipate our union with them. "Here," said the Apostle to those who were about to endure all the perils and the vicissitudes of Jerusalem's siege, all the horrors and all the afflictions which were coming upon the devoted city—"Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." In the mean time charity was to "cover the multitude of sins;" they were to "let brotherly love continue." How unnatural to think that this was all pent up within the present earth, and that in heaven those amiable feelings should enjoy no scope, and enjoy no expatiation!

The process of judgment seems to include this recognition of each other. A cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of Jesus shall not be without its reward. The Saviour, specifying those who are before him shall say, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Now, this is reflected in the persons of those who are in the crowd: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Then, when we go further, and consider the Christian doctrine upon the destruction and the overthrow of death, the triumph which has taken place over that monster, we find that the Sacred Writings abound in hints of illation and of evidence. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Now, this implies that all that death has done of evil and of pain shall be compensated, that the victory shall be stripped from him, that the sting shall be taken from him, and that, in fact, the chasm shall be filled up. But what has been a more bitter consequence of death than bereavement—the separation from relations, and the loss of friends? How, if that is never repaired, can it be said that death has no sting, that the grave has no victory? How is it that you are enabled to shout that cry over the coffin, and over the hearse, and over the mausoleum, but that the dead shall live—but that they shall arise from the dust—but that you shall know them when re-organized and re-animated—when you shall meet them, spirits in glory and in bliss? The very triumph, therefore, which is to be achieved evolves, according to your preacher's apprehension, that that which is the principal bitter and evil in death shall be made up to us. And how can it be made up but by our re-union with those from whom we are now severed?

But think of the happiness of the heavenly world. Will all remembrance of that world which we have left be suspended? Shall we not think of the means of our conversion—what we have done for others—what others have done for us? Hear the new language: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Is not this a rush



of the past upon the soul? Is not this like living again? And how could we conceive of the zest and the vividness of the transport but by the contrast which earth with all its vicissitudes, and sin with all its sorrow, will supply?

We therefore think that it is not merely an intimation, that it is absolutely a discovery, that it is a clear doctrine of Scripture, that we shall know each other if, through infinite grace, we are "saved even as they."

We are not at all, however, unconscious that objections may be raised against this doctrine. It may be said to be a very restrictive one. Shall we not range at all? Shall we not know all that family of heaven formed as it is from the infinite family of earth? Let us remember that eternity is before us, and that the probability is, that we, in the compass of that eternity, may know and enjoy them all. But from what centre shall we at the earliest period proceed? How shall we commence that joy that shall be perpetuated and heightened through the ages of eternity? Is it restrictive and is it narrow to suppose that those with whom we have taken sweet counsel will be those whom we first shall address, or will be the first to accost us? And though it shall be only the commencement of that high and sublime familiarity, yet that familiarity will require commencement. And then, perhaps, as we go on, circle after circle, knowledge added to knowledge, endearment heaped upon endearment, as by a sort of intuition the disciples knew a Moses and an Elijah, so may we know even as also we are known.

It may, perhaps, be further contended, that we shall be too much engaged in our own happiness to heed the enlargement of that happiness in the knowledge of others. But let us pause for a moment, and demand what knowledge is there that we require for this happiness. Is it the knowledge of esteem, and of love, and of friendship? And there is no happiness in religion which is contracted and selfish. So that we may look around on all that vast domain, and all that blood-bought multitude, and we may even inquire their former condition, as well as gaze upon their present immortality; and it will not be distracting to our own happiness, to say, "Who are these, and whence come they?" And, therefore, our happiness not being narrow and circumscribed, we are happy in loving others, in loving them even as they love us. And thus shall it be perfected in us: we shall dwell in God, and God in us.

But shall we not (and we honour the sensitiveness of the objection) shall we not be so enrapt in the vision of the Lamb—so enamoured of the glory of the beauty of Him who is in the midst of the throne, that there can be no vacancy in our eye for the creature, and not one nook in the heart in which a creature shall be enshrined? There is something honourable but mistaken in the objection; because, do we not *here* honour the Saviour? Said Paul, "They glorify God in me:" and there were those on earth of whom he spake, as being the glory of Christ; Christ was therefore magnified in them. And when there are harpers harping with their harps, and multitudes uniting in vocal chorus, will not the union of those sounds, and the swell of those acclamations, induce each other to love the Saviour as they are acquainted with each, entering into each other's sympathies and each other's joy?

But, it will be said, if we can remember the good, must we not remember the evil? If we recognise our beloved friends, must we not deplore the absence of those, who, whatever was their guilt, were dear to our bosoms, and were

twined around our hearts? My brethren, the love which we owe to our unconverted acquaintance and friends, it is not our purpose to condemn. Love them, and show that you have much sorrow in your hearts for your brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh: but remember, that whatever you deplore, on the supposition that they are now lost, or in any way put yourselves in an antagonist attitude to the divine will and the divine arrangement, there is a feeling which we denominate an amiable feeling, but which is really unamiable, if it is in contravention of what the divine law has demanded and denounced. But you are perfect in heaven; that which is in part is done away, that which is perfect is come. You cannot conceive of that which is perfect in heaven, without the most entire, absolute acquiescence, in what God has arranged, or what God has suffered. Then, though this feeling will not arise and not distress, we can most easily presage, that there it is unknown, exactly because the will of God is done in heaven: and whenever we ask, that that will may be done now, it is that it may be "done on earth as it is in heaven." We know not that awful exultation which glorified spirits raise over the downfall of their spiritual adversaries; but the smoke of their torment may arise, and yet they shall cry "Hallelujah! the judgment of the enemies of God is come."

But is not this an unworthy consideration, that we might live indifferently; and, amidst those sweet glimpses of other bright visions of heaven, which come on our spirits, might we not, at least, forget and even reject those whom we loved? My brethren, we want nothing that reverses the nature that God gave us: we can find in religion nothing irrational, nothing unnatural: every thing in religion is nothing but the refinement of what we are, the taking from us that which is gross and alloying. Now that which makes us capable of loving, must always be honourable to us: and what is there more pleasingly associated with the thought of home, than that there shall be some welcome tone falling on our ears, that there shall be some familiar feature reaching your eye—that there shall be something assuring and confidential in the manner of a few spirits grouped around us who know us, who are unveiled to us, and by whom we are as instantly recognised as we recognise them: and these leading us forward to the very footstool of the throne, taking the place of the very "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." So that, angels having borne our spirits to the heavenly threshold, there shall be some of our best friends, our kindred there, ready to meet us, and there to dwell with them for ever. It is not, oh Saviour, to forget thee that we think of them whom thou hast loved, and whom we still love to remember.

There is an improvement to be made of this subject (which, I trust, will not be regarded as curious speculation, but as scriptural truth), and it is this. Of course there are those who, by their incorrigible and impenitent conduct, prove that they have no desire to meet their sires in the realms of peace: they love not the goodness here, and they desire not an incorruption with the good for ever. All that we can understand: and yet it may be that the disobedient child has sometimes hugged the thought to himself, that his happiness was necessary to the happiness of his parents—of a father who has expostulated, a mother who has wept; and this has been the very thought and purpose of their heart: "They cannot be happy without me: may I not therefore be saved, even if it be by fire?" No: and let me particularly enter a caveat against a

sentiment like this, and protest against that which is so unnatural, and which is so unfounded. Little care you, evidently, for parents' sympathy and commiseration, who only think that that commiseration and that sympathy can stand you in some stead. There is an insensibility, there is an ungraciousness, there is that which is perfectly fiendish in the suggestion itself. But your parents will not then have all that now belongs to them, for they will be as the angels of God; they will not know what it is to weep; they will be perfect in their joy as well as complete in their purity. And (if it be then necessary and so ordered) think not that your parents, for a moment, would forbid the execution of the sentence, or the stroke of the Judge. You will not be able to cover their breast with a single shade of disquietude—not be able, for a single moment, to grieve or wound their heart. You have done your last, you have done your worst, but parental kindness and sensibility will never stand between you and the wrath of the Almighty.

This is a subject that should excite us to usefulness. He who teaches in the Sabbath Schools, and he who goes about in the lanes, and in the purlieus in the city, what has encouraged him when most disheartened, and fortified him when most relaxed? That there is some one now his persecutor who shall be his eternal joy; that there is one who is throwing all his ridicule upon him who shall rejoice with him in the mansions of their common Father's house. Oh let the teacher of the child thus bear it in mind. There is a child most hopeless and apparently most irreclaimable; a few more years the child is lost to the teacher, the teacher to the child; and now the teacher, unnoticed and unheard of, enters on his reward. What spirit comes and greets him now? That vacant face (but oh, you have made it radiant), that idle hand (but oh! you have taught it to strike the golden harp), that bitter voice (but oh! you have made it musical with the anthems of heaven)—live, and that very one over whom you have despaired, comes to bless you, to invite you, to repay you!

And is not this the very thought involving the fact of recognition: "If any of you do err from the truth, and one of you convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul alive, and shall hide the multitude of sins?" Know it as an impalpable abstraction? Know it as a possible fact? Know it as a fact that never can be denied? You take away the very zeal of piety by such criticisms as these. "Let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul alive, and shall hide the multitude of sins"—knowing that he who soweth and he who reapeth shall rejoice together.

But this is a subject which may teach us to condole with each other, and a circumstance is involved in this subject which makes us think more soberly of the future than of the present or of the past. There are some who are quite young in this assembly, and they think they are surrounded with a world of friends. There are others who have arrived at middle age, and at absolute age. Let me ask, then, if you are prepared for heaven? Is not this that which quickens the very thought of that heaven, that you go to find more friends than you leave behind? This is the highest excellence, this is concentrated goodness, and though we reflect not on the present, and, least of all, despair of the future, believing that the very saints of the Most High shall populate our earth—yet why are our feelings so lacerated, and our affections so thwarted? What is

heaven but the regaining of so much as we have lost, and much more than we can ever hope to find?

Therefore, my brethren, though we give all glory to God and to the Lamb, though we think of that uncreated radiance which spreads itself over the everlasting hills, though we think of the angels with their harps, yet let us not forget, in the enumeration of all that belongs to heaven, in the enumeration of all those glories, and of all those felicities, that *there* dwell those who once dwelt below, that *there* walk those with whom we once walked, that *there* sing those with whom we once sung. But as we sung with them the sigh interfered, and the tear frequently fell upon the cheek; but *then* we shall sing together and the song shall never fade, shall never drop, and shall never die away. “Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words.” **Amen.**



## CHRIST THE FOUNDATION.

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REV. J. SHERMAN.

SURREY CHAPEL, APRIL 26, 1834.

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“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”—ISAIAH, xxviii. 16.

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THE two great pillars on which Satan erects his kingdom are, carnal security, and the building on a false foundation. By one he lulls the guilty consciences of men to sleep, and persuades them that all is safe and well, while sudden destruction is hastening upon them, and hurrying them to perdition: by the other he blinds the eyes of men so that they shall not see the foundation which God has laid in Zion, and deceives and disappoints them by inclining them to rely on those which he himself has pointed out. Under these two great divisions, whatever the hopes, or expectations, or principles of men may be—under these two great divisions the whole of the unconverted part of the world are placed. Every unconverted man, woman, and child, in my congregation this evening, belongs to the one class or to the other: each is either totally indifferent about his soul's salvation, and carnally secure of heaven, though he is an enemy to God and a despiser of his Christ; or else he is building his hope on some insecure foundation, which the besom of God's wrath shall in the end sweep away.

And this is not to astonish us: it is nothing new; it was so from the beginning. Whilst Abel chose God's method of expiation, and sought his favour by sacrifice, Cain chose to bring rather of the fruits of the earth, supposing that this mode of expiation, though not devised by heaven, though contrary to God's appointment would meet with equal acceptance with that of Abel. For a hundred and twenty years Noah preached righteousness to the Antediluvians, and he declared to them that the ark was the only place of safety—that neglecting the ark they perished—that if they failed to enter that, the deluge of wrath would sweep them away: but they scoffed at his exhortations, they chose to live in sin, to defy the Most High, and perish (as they did) in their fatal security. Although the prophet Isaiah preached the Gospel more fully, and with more brilliant imagery, and with more enlivening eloquence than any of his predecessors, yet even in his days, animated as the Gospel was through his lips, delivered as it was with his glowing descriptions of its beatitudes and its glories, even in his days such deluded souls were found. He preached to them “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little” as they could bear it, “and there a little,” as they

could bear it: but notwithstanding this they would not hear; they turned his message into a profane jest, and trusted in those false foundations which the Prophet told them were lies, and at the same time, declared that they had "made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement;" and that "when the overflowing scourge passed through, it should not come near them."

It was to such base, ungrateful, and horribly impious men that the words of my text were addressed: and they come in, you observe, immediately after this statement: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." To all such in this congregation to-night, however many or few they may be, God sends this awakening message.

There are three things on which the unconverted part of mankind generally build their hopes of salvation: the first is, their good deeds; the second is, their good professions, the third is, their good intentions. Are you ready my brethren, to stand the scrutiny of the Great Day, and to say now that you will build your everlasting all upon the pitiful and sinful *works* which your hands can perform? Then hear the law, what it saith: "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall *no flesh*"—if he be the king on the throne, or the captive behind the mill—there is no flesh that lives, who of his own deeds "shall be justified in His sight."

Are you willing to trust to your *good professions*? Are you willing to say, "My father and my mother brought me to Surrey Chapel; there from my earliest infancy I attended; there, and at other places of worship, I heard the most powerful ministers of God, and engaged in devotion with those who were enlisted in the service of Christ?" Are you willing to rest your hopes of salvation on this? Then go to yonder gate, and hear the sound, and hearken to that voice, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But saith He within, "Why should I open unto you?" "Lord, hast thou not preached in our streets? Have we not heard you? Have we not sought you? Have we not been among them that worshipped thee? Now let us in." No: then will he say unto such, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, I know you not."

Well, but some present may say, "I am no scholar: I have, notwithstanding all these things, a good heart; my *intentions* are good, though I may not be so well instructed as others; I *mean* well, and therefore I hope God will have mercy upon me, and that all will end well." Do you? Hear from heaven to-night the annunciation, "Other foundation shall no man lay," (not even his good intentions) "than that which is laid"—which is Christ Jesus;" and failing here you perish.

Wherefore, brethren, to all such in this assembly, and to all those who have already built upon this foundation, are the words of the text addressed: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone." Suffer me to direct your attention to the two great points contained in my text. First, God's foundation for the stability of his church; in the second place, the peculiar qualities by which this

foundation is distinguished ; in the third place, the safety and blessedness of all that build upon it.

#### First, GOD'S FOUNDATION FOR THE STABILITY OF HIS CHURCH.

Much pains are taken by skilful architects that the foundation of a building should be good, that the spot chosen be suitable, and that the material itself be proper ; because if these be not good, the safety of the building is endangered. Now God had a temple to erect, so glorious that it was to be the admiration of angels, and the wonder of the world : and this temple was so precious that every stone in it was to be a living stone, nay, a jewel ; and every one of them was to be purchased, placed, polished by his own hand ; and every stone in this great temple was itself to be a temple. Nearly six thousand years have elapsed in the erection of this temple, and still the building is in progress, and will be completed only when the last elect soul is dug from the quarry of nature, and, amidst the shouts of the church and the rejoicing of angels, is placed on the top of the building with shouts of " Grace, grace unto it." This temple is of vast breadth, and from it the revenues of God's glory shall eternally spring ; and therefore God has chosen and laid a foundation in every respect suitable, equal to the weight and the glory of this building. This foundation was planned in the eternal counsels of Jehovah, it was actually laid in the incarnation and sufferings of Christ, and it is constantly proclaimed in the publication of the Gospel.

*This foundation was planned in the eternal counsels of Jehovah.* The Apostle Peter, when quoting this passage has this peculiar phraseology : " Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious." Now, when a stately edifice is to be erected, plans are devised by the most skilful artists which the country can produce. Jehovah, foreseeing the fall of man, and that thereby he would lose his image, and consequently his hope of everlasting life, counselled by what means a sure foundation might be laid for a sinner, and at the same time a sure foundation be laid for his own glory ; that is, that at one and the same time sinners might be saved, God's justice satisfied, his law magnified, and his glory advanced. The foundation required must be sufficiently strong to bear the whole church, the meanest and the weakest believer of the whole ; the vessels of large, and the vessels of small quantity, must all bear their weight on this ; so that every individual of our race may, with all his guilt, all his sin, and all his misery, be borne up by this foundation.

And where shall we look for an individual to take this charge ? No angel could do it, no man could undertake it. Oh, I hear a voice from heaven, speaking from the excellent glory to his Son, " Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." It was in that council the proposition was made that the Everlasting Son should assume human nature, should come down to our world, and should there bear the weight of the guilt of his Church. And when the proposition was made did the Son of God refuse ? No : we have his answer recorded in the Word of God : " Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ; mine ears hast thou opened : burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to

do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." And when these words escaped his lips the Eternal Father proclaimed to all in heaven and all in earth, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles." Brethren, our salvation was not a work of inconsideration or precipitancy; our salvation was a work of much deliberation and consultation, of infinite and unsearchable wisdom, the mystery of Godliness, the manifold wisdom of God.

*This foundation was actually laid in the incarnation and sufferings of Jesus Christ.* When the plans of a noble building are completed, some great person is generally selected to lay the first or the foundation stone. But as there was none greater than himself, God says, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone." God delayed the laying of this stone for four thousand years after the world was created. It is spoken of, you perceive, in this passage, as if the foundation were laid at that period, and simply for this reason. It is true that it had been representatively laid in the first promise, and in the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic economy, and they who by faith at that period looked through these ceremonies to Jesus—if they built their hopes, not on the ceremonies, but on the Messiah whom they represented, had everlasting life. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: he saw it, and was glad." But "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth (from the eternal mansions) his Son, made of a woman (in our very nature), made under the law (under its malediction and curse), to redeem them that were under the law (to take the curse from them by bearing it himself):" and hence "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:" "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Now, when he had thus borne our sins in his own body on the tree, satisfied God's justice by the offering up of himself, and with a loud voice cried, so that he shook the pillars of hell, and made all the courts of heaven rejoice, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost, from that moment a foundation was laid for the hope of penitent and believing sinners; the work was done, righteousness was brought in, atonement was made, satisfaction was given: now God, without sacrificing his justice, can pardon, and the sinner, without making atonement, can be saved; God in strict equity can justify, and the sinner without presumption can believe and live.

*This foundation is proclaimed in the preaching of the Gospel.* It is to be laid in Zion, in the Church of Christ, in the assembly of the people. As it was representatively laid in the counsels of eternity, as it was actually laid in the incarnation, so it is laid in every Gospel sermon that is preached. Therefore "to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Their messages often contained the most dreadful denunciations, the most awful warnings; but the sinner would have been left hopeless and remediless without this warning and exhortation to take Christ as the foundation for his hopes. He was distinctly and explicitly, brought forward to the sinner's view even under the Mosaic economy: and here it is introduced to scoffers. Behold, see the grace and the love of God to you and to me! Surely this is the Gospel, this the glad tidings to all; this is good news from a far country, that Christ by his satisfaction and



death hath made atonement for sin, and thereby laid a solid foundation for the sinner's hope. And, let me say, whatever sermon wants this statement is not the Gospel. It may be eloquent, but it is not the Gospel; it may have the charms of imagery, but it is not the Gospel. Without this there is nothing for a sinner to rest upon, nothing for a sinner to hope in. How blessed the task is, to lay this foundation. I bless God that I am in the ministry; I bless God that I have these good tidings to bring to this great assembly—that Christ hath died, that he has made atonement for sin, that henceforth every obstacle is removed, and the way is made plain for every penitent sinner that will believe in his name. Oh, that the number of ministers that shall preach this Gospel may be increased! Oh, that every pulpit in our own land may be filled with men proclaiming that Christ came into the world to save sinners! Oh that the waste places of the world may hear these glad tidings and live, that the glory of our God may spread from pole to pole!

**Secondly, we remark THE PECULIAR QUALITIES BY WHICH THIS FOUNDATION IS DISTINGUISHED.**

First, observe that it is "*a stone*." Christ is frequently set forth in the Inspired Writings as a stone, to denote strength; as, when it is said of "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands," that "it filled the whole earth." It was "cut out without hands"—that is, without any human interference or human aid. The stones of the temple were of extraordinary dimensions; so that the disciples, when they stood on Mount Olivet, said to the Saviour, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here."

Now, to support this mighty mass, it was necessary there should be a strong foundation laid: and hence God says, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." It is true that he possessed a human nature, a true and a reasonable soul, or he could not have been the foundation of that spiritual building on which these human stones are to rest; but he must be "the Mighty God," or the vast fabric of the Church would crush him beneath its weight.

Solomon in the temple reared two pillars of brass: the one he called "Jachin," that is, "He is established:" and the other he called "Boaz," that is, "strength." Now these two pillars typified the invincible strength and stability of the Church. The priesthood and the government of Christ are these two pillars which support this mighty mass of building—the foundation, if I may so speak, the golden pillars that bear up all. The poets fabled one Atlas who used to bear the whole globe on his shoulders; but what they imagined is here presented in reality: "the government is on His shoulders:" he bears the mighty weight, not only of the Church, but of the whole universe of God.

Besides this, Christ has a property which is peculiar to himself: he is "*a living stone*:" "To whom coming as unto a living stone." He, possessing life in himself, is able to communicate it; so that stones like marble, that can neither see, nor hear, nor feel, when once built upon this foundation, become "lively stones" in the spiritual building, and offer up a sacrifice of prayer and praise for ever. Let no one in this place fear that the burden of his sin is too heavy to be taken to the Son of God; for he is a mighty Saviour. Try him; bear the whole weight of your guilt on the foundation God has laid in Zion; and

you shall find that the mighty, the blessed, and the incomparable stone of atonement—the person, and work, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, are sufficient to take it all away, and to bear you up under the mighty weight.

It is represented as “a *tried* stone.” It is necessary for every wise master-builder to examine and prove the quality of the materials which he uses for the foundation: if they are rotten, the building must fall. Behold, then, the stone which God has raised, is “a *tried* stone:” heaven tried it; earth tried it; hell tried it. *The Father* tried Christ’s faithfulness by trusting his elect, with all their salvation and glory, to him: his heavenly Father tried his strength by laying upon him the iniquities of us all: his heavenly Father tried his love by causing him to drink the cup of wrath, placing him in the ignominious situation of the death of the cross, and that not for his friends, but for his enemies; by withdrawing himself from him for a season, so that he cried “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And what after this trial is the testimony of heaven respecting this Son? “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

And *earth* tried it. As soon as this foundation was laid, earth began to try it. Herod thought to break it in pieces by murdering the infants in Bethlehem; but he failed. The Pharisees tried it. They derided him with the shameful charge of being a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber—as being mad, and as having a devil. See them take him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong. Behold them dragging him before Pilate, crowning him with thorns, spitting upon him, putting a reed in his hand, and clothing him in a purple robe, and hailing him as King of the Jews; while the soldiers smote him with the palms of their hands. See the multitude demanding his death, placing a massive cross on his shoulders. Behold them piercing his hands and feet when suspending his precious body on the tree. And at this moment he is the foundation still: his love, like himself, is unchangeable and for ever. Hear the multitude when he hung on the tree, exclaiming, “He saved others, himself he could not save:” they simply made a mistake in one letter; “He saved others, himself he would not save.”

But their malice pursues him still further. They go to Pilate and they say, “Sir, we remember that this deceiver said, ‘In three days I will rise again.’” “Well,” said Pilate, “you have a watch; go and make the place as sure as you can.” Away they go; they procure a massy stone to break this foundation; they roll it against the door; they seal it; they set a watch; and then they return, rejoicing that the foundation is broken in shivers. But was this the case? No: the foundation was not *shaken*. On the third day he rose from the dead, and ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, and for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst us. Sinner, he endured all this for you: his heart was intent upon your salvation. And what, after this trial, is the testimony of earth? Let us bring forward two of his foes. Pilate declared, “I find no fault in this man.” Judas confessed, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”

But *hell* tried it. All its forces were brought to destroy this foundation, its cursed battering-rams were brought to bear on this stone which God had laid in Zion. “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil:” but instead of shaking him, he passed through the world, with the storm of divine wrath, and the storm which they raised, beating on his soul,

still intent on his purpose, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Instead of shaking him, these temptations of the enemy have only given him an experimental sympathy with all tempted souls. So that if thou art tempted, tempted hard and tempted long, by building thy hope on this foundation which God hath laid in Zion, you will receive succour and support. And what is the testimony of hell after this trial? "I know thee whom thou art, the only Son of God."

Then he is "a *precious corner stone*." Corner stones are generally placed for three purposes: the first is for union; the second is, for beauty; the third is, for direction or example.

The *first* is, for *union*. Take the corner stone from a building, and the two sides by which it is held instantly give way; they are separated from the building. So our Lord is the common bond of union to all parts of his church. The meanest and the greatest, the weakest and the strongest, the most finished stone and the most rough, that which is most concealed in the interior of the building, and never seen by any eye but God's, and that which is most exposed to the church's view—to all he is one common bond. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee." For a long time Jews and Gentiles were separate; but now that Christ is come, the ceremonial law is abolished, and he hath made all into one by breaking down the middle wall of partition which separated them.

The *second* is, for *beauty*. When the Psalmist was wishing prosperity to the Church, he prayed "that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace," that is, beautiful and happily united. Skilful builders are careful, therefore, that corner stones should be both graceful and durable, at once exhibiting the accuracy of their work, and the excellency of the material. And oh, what a beautiful stone is Christ our Lord! How easily may he be distinguished from all other stones in a building! Take this away, and the whole will be a confused and uncomely heap. When Christ appeared in his glory, his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the moon. All the stones of this building are made comely through the glory which he reflects upon them; and therefore to all the stones he is so precious that they cannot describe his preciousness, in the dignity of his person, and in the perfection of his work.

The *third* is for *direction or example*. Every other stone must be squared by the corner stone, must be regulated by that. So Christ is the precious corner stone; every stone in the body is to be conformed to him; by the rule of his word they must be squared, and by the exhibition of his example they must be regulated; and if not, the building is defaced and dishonoured: and therefore this corner stone is placed in the building that you may see any unevenness or deformity in your conduct: while a voice says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The passage says, it is "a *sure foundation*." All others are treacherous, this is sure; all others are perilous, this is sure; all others have given way when they have been tried, this is sure. It is a foundation discovered by infinite wisdom, adapted by consummate perfection, laid by the hands of omnipotence, cemented by a covenant of blood, and testified by the oath of God. What more can be wanted for security? But if you want more you have this: God has

staked all his attributes, and all his perfections upon this foundation ; his honour and his glory, his justice and his grace, rest here. Millions of souls, with all their guilt, have proved the security of this foundation : it has raised them from earth to heaven, from a state of sin to a state of righteousness. There are myriads in glory to-night, who, if their voice could be heard in this assembly would be heard to say, " Venture on Him ; let no other trust intrude ; and you shall find safety and happiness as we have done."

And myriads upon earth have tried him. If I look round this assembly, and catechise those who have ventured their trust on the foundation God has laid in Zion, what support they have found in trouble, and affliction, and bereavement, and death, the reply would be like the testimony of Hopeful to Christian, when they were crossing Jordan to enter into the gates of the Celestial City. " Oh brother," said Christian, " the waves roll over me ; I sink in deep water, where there is no standing : " " No, brother," said Hopeful, " be of good cheer ; I feel the bottom ; it is good." So many a saint, when expiring can say, " I rest upon a rock ; my Saviour's righteousness and blood are the foundation of my hope and the expectation of my spirit." Therefore it is a *sure* foundation, so that you may say, " My flesh and heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Let me direct your attention, thirdly, to **THE SAFETY AND BLESSEDNESS OF ALL THOSE WHO DEPEND UPON THIS FOUNDATION.** " He that believeth shall not make haste." He that believeth has set to his seal that God is true. This is a most important point in believing: a man receives the testimony of God, and settles it in his heart that there is such a foundation.

Believing is the casting away of all other foundations, and calling them "refuges of lies," and "hiding places of misery." Believing is casting your soul, with all your hope of eternal happiness, upon the atoning merit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is your guilt an insupportable burden? Believing is the taking away of this guilt, and casting it upon Jehovah-Jesus. " Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Do you find that everything beneath you is just like shifting sand, where there is no real security? Believing is placing your feet of faith upon this foundation, and standing unmoved amidst the shocks of error, and the destruction and the distress, which are manifesting themselves around you, and feeling the truth of that passage—" Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Are your opportunities fast failing, and life fast vanishing away, and yet to this moment you have no real resting place? Believing, is venturing your precious soul on this foundation, with all the contracted guilt of former years, all your unimproved opportunities, all your unnumbered transgressions, casting them on the Son of God, by saying, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

He that so believeth shall not make haste. He shall not make haste as a man who, putting his foot on the ground, feels it moving under him : he is fixed on a firm foundation, and does not want to remove. He shall not make haste like that thief or robber, who would climb up to heaven " some other way," and, when the Judge sits on the throne, hastes from his presence and trembles to appear before him.

I am aware that another interpretation has been put on this passage by some



commentators: "He that believeth shall not make haste;" that is, he shall not rush into comfort at once, and begin to be happy before he has ever been miserable. It is a gradual process, first the blade appearing, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; first the child, then the young man, then the father in Christ; first the foundation, then the superstructure, then the top-stone. And be not discouraged if you are pressing to heaven amidst many difficulties, and your hearts and spirits are sometimes broken with the afflictions of the way: remember "he that walketh uprightly walketh surely"—that though you may not make the haste that some do, yet the snail got into the ark as well as the Arabian courser.

This passage ought to present itself to you in the light in which the Apostles have placed it before us: "He that believeth," says Paul, "shall not be ashamed:" "He that believeth," says Peter, "shall not be confounded." There are three things that make men ashamed and confounded—sin, disappointment, and the judgment. *Sin* makes men ashamed. God has established an irreversible decree that shame shall be the companion and the reward of sin. *Disappointment* makes a man ashamed and confounded that he has nothing to answer for himself when he has been trusting to lies and made flesh his refuge. And *judgment* will make many ashamed who in that great day, instead of the work of Christ, shall present their own deeds. But "he that believeth shall not be ashamed;" "he that believeth shall not be confounded."

This is the felicity and the blessedness of them that trust in him. Brethren, you who have believed in him, cast all your concerns, all your difficulties, all your trials, upon this foundation. Remember that Christ is the burden-bearer of the Church. Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you. You have a burden of guilt, a burden of domestic trial, a burden of doubt; but cast them all here, and you shall be assured. Israel shall be "saved of the Lord"—Israel shall "not be confounded, world without end."

How dreadfully grievous must be the state of that man who dares to oppose the foundation which God has laid in Zion! "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." Would you associate with unbelieving Jews and infidels? Would you disdain the Son of God, and despise the only hope of mercy laid down in the Sacred Writings? Oh, my heart pities you. Fain would I weep over you, and exhort you to turn and live. What can your puny arm do to overturn this stone? He that falleth upon it shall be "broken in pieces," but upon whomsoever it shall fall, "it shall grind him to powder." What can you do? Where is your strength? Go, stop the sun in its course; go to the falls of Niagara, and bid the waters cease to flow! You overthrow this foundation! It is under the Almighty's superintendence; the building is rearing under his hand; and the top-stone shall be brought out with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it." But on you will the horrible charge be laid of having attempted to draw souls from the Son of God, and to deprive them of the comforts of God's salvation. What! are you not content to perish yourself, but you must drag your wife, your neighbour, your friend, your sister, your brother, your child, into the same pit of misery! Oh, horrible impiety! God forgive you, my dear hearers! The Lord, for Christ's sake, forgive you! May he seal the truth of his word: "Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

## THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE TO CHRIST.

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TRINITY CHURCH, CLOUDESLEY SQUARE, ISLINGTON, AUGUST 10, 1834.

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“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”—JOHN, xxi. 16.

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God is love; and the grand characteristic of his revealed truth is love. Its principle, from the beginning to the end, accords with the angelic song, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men.” The foundation of it is laid in the everlasting love of the Father; the most costly proof of it is exhibited in the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. Its manifestation to the children of adoption is exerted by the diffusion and indwelling of his free Spirit into the heart. So that we cannot turn to a page of the Sacred Record, without finding it written, as with a sun-beam, “God is love.” A religion which has such an Author, must inculcate corresponding principles on its true disciples: we are not, therefore, surprised to hear the Apostle to the Gentiles assert, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Indeed, if we were called upon to give a concise exposition of our Lord’s doctrines whilst on earth, it could hardly be summed up in more comprehensive and correct terms than this I have just alluded to—“Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Our Lord commanded the love of his disciples on earth to the extent of his own perfection: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” He commanded them to give continued testimony of their love to himself, by a practical proof of their attachment: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

The conversation between our Lord and his Apostle Peter, as recorded in our text, and the preceding verses, has a peculiar reference to this main spring of Christian love. As our Lord wished to entrust him with the highest and most important of all offices, with the care of the sheep of his fold, it was not only natural but most desirable, that such an inquiry should be made, that the renewal of Peter’s allegiance and regard, by public confession, should be given under these circumstances. The question, however, deeply interesting as it must be when used in its application to the Apostle, cannot be confined to him, or to the disciples who listened to the conversation. Every minister of the everlasting Gospel must read it with a personal application, and every minister of God may find in it subject-matter for the deepest self-examination. But, brethren, its usefulness must not be confined to these, the words of our text contain many useful thoughts of a private nature. They may be dwelt upon

with advantage by all; they may be productive of much spiritual benefit. May the God of all grace bless them to all our minds, and render them highly profitable to our humiliation, and our establishment in the grand doctrine—the evangelical doctrine—the principle of love.

With this design I claim your attention to these two leading thoughts: first, the question, “Lovest thou me?” Secondly, the effect on the mind of Peter, as evinced in his reply—“Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”

I have already observed, that the question is one of the first importance to every Christian, whether holding the office of a spiritual pastor of the flock of Christ, or following him as one of the sheep of his pasture. Under this conviction, permit me, without any previous remark on its application to the Apostle Peter, to put the question at once to each of my beloved flock, in the name, and on the behalf of our Divine Master—“LOVEST THOU ME?” Let me attempt this by the suggestion of some simple thoughts connected with the question.

I first ask, Lovest thou *the offices of Jesus*? He came to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins: he has undertaken to be the prophet, the priest, and the king of his church. Hast thou ever personally delighted in his undertaking? Hast thou seen thy condition as the child of apostate, fallen, and rebellious parents? Is the misery, and the bondage, and the ignorance of your state fully laid open to your minds; the misery entailed upon you in time and eternity by your fall; the bondage in which you have been from your birth, enslaved to the devil, to the world, and to a carnal nature? Have you felt your ignorance of God’s law, and God’s character? Brethren, it was to teach men these humiliating truths, that the Son of God became the Son of man. He is *the prophet* of his church for this express purpose; his first work upon the minds of his disciples is, to send forth his Holy Spirit upon them to convince them of sin, and their condemnation by it; of their slavery in consequence of it; of their natural ignorance of it previous to their conversion, or the instruction of their minds by the Holy Ghost. “It is written in the prophets,” said our Lord, “They shall all be taught of God: every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me.” Lovest thou this office of Immanuel? Lovest thou to plead thy ignorance of thyself, of God, and of holiness, and heavenly things? and lovest thou to be instructed, even as a little child? I beseech you, beloved brethren, put the question home to your hearts.

Again, Lovest thou *the kingly office of the divine Redeemer*? Wilt thou have this man to reign over thee? Remember, that where he teacheth, there he loveth: he imparts his grace; and his grace, saith Paul, enjoineth us to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Alas, brethren, many would be willing to have the Son of God as their Prophet, to be guided into the *apprehension* of divine truths, but they cannot cease from holding the truth in unrighteousness; but remember, the offices of Immanuel are inseparable; he cannot be our prophet unless we submit to his government; he must have the *obedience* of faith. Every thought

must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ in his kingly office; he not only requires, but enforces it upon his true disciples; he works in them "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Now, brethren, do you love this office of Jesus? Lovest thou the Son of God to reign triumphant upon the throne of your hearts, to direct your ways, and to control your lives? Is he in your estimation "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely?" Does he reign in you unrivalled? Is he valued above everything else? Do you count the loss of all things but dross in comparison with Christ?

Again, lovest thou *the office of your Saviour as your Priest*? Does the conviction of your unworthiness, your incapacity to stand before God in judgment, lead you to lay hold on Christ as your only way of escape from the wrath to come? Do you therefore receive him as your atonement for sin, finding there is no other remedy, and that this remedy is always sufficient? But besides this, does the experience of your own weakness, and your own worthlessness, convince you that Jesus was the propitiation for your sins? This would not suffice unless you found in the divine record, that he was likewise the *Advocate* of his church. Oh, Sirs, doth the condemned state of your souls, your natural pollution, so apparently shew itself to you in your every action, word, and thought, that you must confess that your very prayers have need of an Almighty Intercessor to render them acceptable before God? Lovest thou to dwell with unutterable thoughts of gratitude upon the propriety of this precious office? Is it, brethren, an encouragement in the moment of deadness and insensibility to God's presence, that the High Priest of the Christian profession is touched with a feeling of your infirmities? Is it a matter of thanksgiving, that Jesus, as your High Priest, "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" who entered into the temple as your High Priest to offer up sacrifices; and that "by the sacrifice of himself once for all he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified?"

Next, I put the question in reference to the great cause of truth and the Gospel; and I ask each individual, Lovest thou *the cause of Jesus Christ*? That this is implied in the question put to Peter, we may learn from the intimate union between Christ and the members of his mystical body, as well as in the commission given to Peter on this occasion, to feed his sheep. When Saul of Tarsus was breathing out slaughter against the poor despised disciples, on his road to Damascus, the sovereign grace of God appeared, and manifested that sovereignty in the conversion of this murderer, and blasphemer, and persecutor. The Lord gave to his Church a sweet testimony of the holy union between himself and his members; that they were the mystical members of his body, and his flesh, and his bones. You will remember that he did not say to the proud Pharisee, "Saul, why persecutest thou my *followers*:" but, "why persecutest thou *me*?" he identified himself with his flock. We are therefore warranted in putting the question in this light—Lovest thou the cause of Jesus? The patriot, when interrogated upon his love for his country, when questioned whether he desires her success, and her glory and happiness, her increase of wealth, her establishment and security in her lawful possessions, her prosperity and pre-eminence over all other nations of the earth—will, without hesitation declare his deep desire for her welfare: and the Christian may be required upon the very same principle to declare, from his heart, his love to the Church



and answer in the affirmative the question, Lovest thou the cause of Jesus Christ? To Jesus Christ the heathen are promised for his inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for his possession; his dominion is covenanted to be "from sea to sea, and from the rivers even unto the ends of the earth." Now are you anxious for the fulfilment of this prophetic declaration? Have you his cause so much at heart, that you make the extension of the Saviour's kingdom your daily prayer at the throne of grace, in your closets, and in your families?

Further, I might put the question in reference to the cross of Christ, and inquire, Lovest thou *the cross of the Redeemer*? Nothing is so easy, in our day and generation, as making a certain kind of profession of the Gospel which has no cross, no difficulty, no temptation, no denial. Religion is to a certain extent tolerated; nay, admired; I had almost said it is fashionable. But this circumstance, dear brethren, should make the professors of vital godliness more upon their guard not to mistake the name for the thing itself. I would therefore ask, in connexion with the subject, Lovest thou the cross of Jesus Christ? The Apostle Paul could rejoice in tribulation, and take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, and persecution, and in distress for Christ's sake. Now I ask you not, whether you can go to the full extent of the Apostle's experience; but I do ask you whether you are ready to go without the camp, bearing the reproach of Jesus Christ? In other words, whether you are contented to be regarded as weak and enthusiastic visionaries for his sake: whether you can endure, as seeing Him that is invisible; whether you can esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world? I ask you, as in the sight of God, Lovest thou the cross of Christ? He that will not wear the cross shall never wear the crown.

I might enlarge on this head of my discourse, and inquire of each of you, Lovest thou *the servants and the service of Jesus Christ*? Lovest thou the *day* of Jesus Christ? and particularly, Lovest thou the *temper and disposition* that was in Christ Jesus, in its meekness and humility, in its kindness, its self-denial, its holiness? Lovest thou these in a world of temptation?

I proceed under the second topic proposed for our consideration, to consider THE EFFECT OF THE INQUIRY UPON THE MIND OF PETER AS EVINCED IN HIS REPLY. The conversation recorded by the Evangelist in this chapter, took place, it must be remembered, after the mournful and lamentable apostacy of Peter. He had denied his Master, with curses and swearing; he had affirmed, with awful imprecations, that he knew not this same Jesus. When, therefore, after his death and resurrection from the grave, but previously to his ascension to his Father's right hand, he openly showed himself to his disciples in the manner described, the deed itself could not but awaken in the mind of Simon feelings of no ordinary character. The remembrance of the past would open afresh the wounds of Peter, and renew his penitential sorrow for his transgression; but the continued kindness of his Lord, most beautifully marked in that memorable message, given by the angel to the devout women, "Go tell the disciples, *and Peter*," would assure him of his Lord's forgiveness and unchanged regard for him. And, therefore, at such a time, and under such circumstances, the question when first put, "Lovest thou me?" might occasion

some degree of joy, inasmuch as it offered him an opportunity of publicly confessing his attachment to his injured Lord; and he might be glad that his companions heard it. But when the question was repeated, the mind of this servant of God must have read something more in it than he did at first; but still he does not appear to discern the real meaning of the repeated inquiry. A third time the Lord interrogates him, "Lovest thou me?" "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?" Surely he must have been grieved at the remembrance of his apostacy; he must have been grieved that it had generated suspicion of his weakness; his former presumption appears to be succeeded by an increased knowledge of the deceitfulness, and the desperate wickedness of his own heart. His boldness is tempered with self-acquaintance, and he has had a deeper insight into his own character. But still he learned by his fall his great need of a free and unmerited salvation, such as Jesus offered, such as Jesus had purchased. And this supposition accords with his earlier declaration, "Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life: we believe, and are sure, thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God."

But further; the reply of the Apostle deserves our deep attention on these two grounds: *it gives us undoubted proof that the Apostle regarded Jesus as "God over all, blessed for ever;" and it contains an unhesitating avowal of love to Jesus.* The Apostle regards Jesus as "God over all, blessed for evermore." Would he, brethren, could he, have applied to the man Christ Jesus, the words of the text, had not the deity of Jesus Christ formed an essential part of his creed? How absurd, how ridiculous, would such language be, applied even to the highest archangel? Could he have said to him, "Lord thou knowest all things?" Could it possibly be asserted of a mere man—"Thou knowest all things?" It would be blasphemous as well as absurd. Here, therefore, we read a part of the Apostle's creed, that Jesus was "very God of very God." But Jesus being regarded as omniscient, Peter could have declared concerning him, as the conviction of his own mind, in the language of the Psalmist, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." "Thou knowest all things."

But again, it contains an *unqualified avowal of his love.* Though he had disgraced his profession by his denial of his Lord, though he had even publicly fallen, before a world that might always afterwards brand him as the man who was false to his Saviour, yet he could not be silent when his Lord demanded, the third time, the required sacrifice of his love. He confessed him, though doubtless with indescribable feelings of grief; and his subsequent sufferings, his continued consistency of character, and his glorious crucifixion with his head downwards, a fit emblem of his humility, proved to the Church afterwards the truth of his assertion. Jesus knew all hearts; he could discern the future as well as the present; with him a thousand years were as one day, and one day

as a thousand years : and from this knowledge he perceived the faithfulness of his servant, and upon his determined purpose to uphold him by his grace, he gave him his apostolical commission with his other disciples, to feed the sheep of Christ's fold. "Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep."

Now, my beloved brethren, in the conclusion of my subject, I would offer one or two suggestions for your personal improvement. My subject leads me to represent to you, in the first place, *an increased attention to personal religion*. Let every man say to his own heart, in the name of the Saviour, "Lovest thou the Saviour ; Do I love the Saviour ?" Let religion be to you a matter of individual concern. "Follow not the multitude to do evil ;" neither be contented in following a multitude of religious professors, if you believe their habits, their tempers, their practices, and associations, are opposed to the will and word of God. Weigh all opinions and all practices in the balance of the Sanctuary. You must die alone ; and pass through the valley of the shadow of death ; and though you shall stand in the judgment-day before the assembled worlds, yet you must give an account of yourself before God ; you must, as it were, be separated and condemned by yourself, singly and individually. To your own Master you stand or fall. Let, then, your attachment to the office and cause, the cross and character of Jesus, be tried for yourself ; as though you stood alone in the world. The Saviour makes this appeal ; demands of every accredited disciple, "Lovest thou me ?"

Next, I would say, how lamentable is the state of those who make no account of the great salvation, of the Gospel of the ever blessed God. Occupied either in the attainment of the perishing honours, and profits, and praises of this world, they consume their days with vanity, as though they had no souls ; they spend their lives as a tale that is told, and they go down to the grave, unpardoned, unsanctified, and unsaved. Do I address any of my fellow men whose consciences accord with this view ? Then would I put the question to you in the name of the Saviour of a lost world, "Lovest thou me ?" Were many of you honestly to put the question, the reply would be, "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I *do not* love thee. I have no anxiety about my immortal soul : thy salvation is a strange thing to me ; it is a matter of total indifference to me, a thing of nought, a dead letter. It is not the one thing needful to me." Oh, my beloved brethren, how shall I address you ? How shall I tell you of the deep pity the Christian minister, and all the followers of a crucified Lord, feel for you ? They believe you are upon the brink of ruin ; they see you suspended, as by a thread, over the brink of hell ; they call upon you to escape, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may be saved. Why will you perish ? If you do, it is through your own wilfulness : the Saviour's remonstrance is still the same, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." He is ready, he waits, to be gracious : he warns, he invites, he encourages you to come to him and accept his mercy ; and I assure you none ever repented such acceptance.

Again ; I would hold out the text as affording *comfort to the discouraged or the backsliding sinner*. Remember, that the same Jesus who asked the question of Peter, was the same who by his Spirit shed abroad in his heart the truth of the Gospel. Peter would have been once and for ever a traitor, as Judas was ;

but God's distinguishing grace marked him for a vessel of mercy ; by its influence upon his heart, restored him to the faith, to a more faithful allegiance, increased usefulness, and seemed to write, in more indelible characters upon his heart, the favour of his Lord, so that nothing could separate him from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus. Do you, my beloved brethren, who are desponding under a sense of your apostacy from your Saviour, return to him ; for to whom can you go ? he only hath the words of eternal life. Go to him with all your burden ; he alone can bear it, and he engages to do it ; give him your unqualified confidence ; trust your whole soul with him ; be assured, that in his own time he will advance you to the comfort, the enjoyment, and the bliss of his inheritance. Let your many sins be no discouragement ; behold the apostate, lying, cursing Peter, restored to God and holiness, to mercy and truth. Jesus the Saviour redeemed unto eternity them that come to God by him.

Lastly, my Christian brethren, *cultivate, I beseech you, a growing attachment to your great Redeemer.* Let the answer to the question, " Lovest thou me ? " be written out in *intelligible characters* : you know what I mean—in the characters of a highly devoted, self-denying, spiritual life. They that truly love Christ, keep his commandments ; the principle of love renders this no longer, after the natural man, grievous : it is the meat and drink of the true disciple of Christ to *do*, as well as to *know* his Lord's will. Oh be faithful to your principles ; love him because he first loved you, and avow your love, if it be needful, before the world : Oh, be not ashamed of Jesus ; own him as the best of Masters : and if other Lords have had dominion over you, be resolved, in his name and his strength, to make mention of his name and his righteousness, and his only. " Be ye faithful unto death, and ye shall receive a crown of life." No one shall be ashamed, in the great day of decision, of an *extensive* love to the Saviour of sinners ; oh, no, but let it be deeply imprinted upon your hearts, where there is much forgiven, there will be much love ; but " to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Now do you, my friends, who know you have much forgiven, prove the truth of this divine assertion, and love your Lord and Saviour *much*.



## THE SPIRITUAL PROSPECTS OF AFRICA.

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REV. W. KNIBB\*.

EAGLE STREET CHAPEL, RED LION SQUARE, AUGUST 17, 1834.

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"Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."—PSALM, lxxix. 31.

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It is, my Christian friends, ten years ago since I had the privilege of sitting down with this Church at the Lord's table, just before my first departure from my beloved country, to proclaim to the Negro salvation through the blood of the Lamb: and in the wise arrangements of a kind and benignant Providence, I find myself again associated with you, not only in person but in spirit, just before I again quit it for the same beloved employment. As I was then followed by your prayers, I have no doubt that I shall still be followed by your earnest supplications; and though one† who then commended me to the care of Him who hath watched over and protected me from that time until now, is this evening celebrating the high praises of his God in the upper and better world, watching, I have no doubt, with intense interest, the result of that measure which was dear to him as life itself—it is pleasurable for us to know, that the same kind sympathy is exercised by our friends who still remain, and that the same affectionate wishes will follow those who, separated from their brethren, will soon be exposed in the high places of iniquity.

There is, fellow Christians, at least in my estimation, a peculiar solemnity attending this meeting; though doubtless I shall feel it with greater intensity and interest than any of you. It is the last Sabbath I shall spend, in all probability, in the land I love; and I stand, in all probability, in this pulpit, occupying it for a short season, in my last public engagement. And I do feel thankful to my Heavenly Father for this opportunity; and I trust it will be esteemed a token of respect to one who ever was dear to me, whose memory I cherish with the fondest affection, and whom I trust I shall be enabled to follow, at a great distance I am well aware, as he followed Christ. I am confident, that as you have breathed his spirit, that as you have frequently been animated by his holy example, that as you have frequently rejoiced in those energetic and giant-like efforts which he made in the destruction of tyranny, I am confident your feelings will be in unison with mine when I direct your attention to the future prospects of the people in whose welfare he felt an undying interest, and over whose interests, I have no doubt, he still watches with most intense delight.

\* As, fellow Christians, a pleasing employ to trace the history, and the steady

Farewell Sermon previous to returning as Missionary to the Island of Jamaica.

† Rev. J. Ivimey.

progress of the Church of the Redeemer : and the nearer any Church approaches to the primitive Church, either in the purity of its doctrines, the means employed to extend its operations, the train of persecutions through which it is called to pass, or the success graciously vouchsafed, by a God of infinite mercy, on the means employed by his servants for the extension of the trophies of his power, the more is the mind of the humble Christian excited, while his gratitude is called forth unto Him who has declared that his Church shall survive every adverse shock, that the influences of his Holy Spirit shall ever attend the administration of his word, and that his fatherly care shall ever be exerted over the people of his love, until the last redeemed son and daughter of Adam are received home by him into glory.

Among those benevolent institutions that are the glory of our age, and among the strenuous efforts that have been made in different parts of the world, there has been a section of the Missionary field that has recently claimed, and recently received, largely of the sympathies of the Christian Church. My hearers will at once perceive I refer to our Western Missionary establishment, among a people robbed, and peeled, and destroyed. When the pity of the philanthropist looks at Africa, and contemplates the wrongs the Negroes have sustained, the accumulated woes that have been heaped upon them for centuries, when we remember they have been the prey of every marauder who has had the power and the will to oppress, we are ready at times to shrink back upon the confines of Atheism itself, and to say, "Can there be a God who governs the earth? Can there be a Moral Governor of the Universe, distinguished for his benevolence, ever ready to aid the oppressed, to succour the destitute, and to cherish the weary? Is there a Being who puts the tears of the oppressed into his bottle; who is ever ready to arise for the purpose of rescuing them from the grasp of those who tyrannize over them?" But let us wait for a time; faith comes in where reason is totally unavailing; we believe and we adore; and sometimes we can realize the belief, relying on the faithfulness of Him to whom secret things belong, and rejoice that things as they reveal themselves belong to us and to our children.

Whatever may have been the designs of man, whatever he may have contemplated in enslaving Africa, we know the Moral Governor of the Universe had other designs, superior to them all; and these designs now appear to develop themselves, for the purpose of cheering the heart of the believer in Christ, and engaging the attention and energies of the whole Christian church. For while the mere philanthropist, or the mere politician, still looks at passing events as conducive or non-conducive to the temporal happiness of man, it becomes us as Christians, as believers in the ultimate success and final triumphs of the Gospel, to look at these things in a higher point of view, and distinctly to mark them as the footsteps of Him whose right it is to reign, and unto whom all nations shall eventually be given. And there has been enough my Christian brethren, during the last two years of our existence, not only to call forth the thanksgivings of the people of God, but also to animate *their* hopes, and to lead them forth to every strenuous effort that they can make, for the purpose of fulfilling those designs of Providence, which appear opening in all their beauty, and in all their loveliness, with respect to this ill-fated, but interesting section of the world.

It will be our endeavour this evening, in taking a farewell of you, to direct you to some of those results which we firmly believe will be brought about in connexion with that Emancipation Act that has lately stamped glory on our land; and happiness on the sons and daughters of Ethiopia. The volume of inspiration contains a direct prophecy with respect to this people; it assures us, that they "shall stretch out their hands unto God;" that however low they may be, however degraded may be their condition, however apparently inaccessible they may be in their mountains or in their caves, that a time shall come, that Providence will so arrange the means that shall be employed, that they shall lift up their dusky hands unto Him who died alike to save both bond and free.

In endeavouring to direct your attention to this all-engrossing, this deeply interesting subject, I shall remark, in the first place, **THAT AMONG THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ETHIOPIA, THERE DOES AT THE PRESENT TIME EXIST A MOST INTENSE DESIRE TO RECEIVE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, AND THAT THEY POSSESS A CAPACITY FOR ITS ATTAINMENT.**

Those who have merely looked at the Christian Church, and confined their attention to the idea that they occupy but a small portion of the human family; those who have looked at the Western Archipelago, and have weighed the importance of our missions there in connexion with the small space of land they occupy in comparison with the whole globe, have formed but a very inadequate idea of the importance of those missions connected with the future destinies of Africa. True, they appear insignificant, and almost trifling when the eye rests on them, and then on the whole globe; it seems indeed but a small speck: but when we bring to our recollection the fact, that there are in this land people from almost every country in Africa; when we remember that there are congregated, the Eboes, the Mandingoes, the Congoes and other nations, who are all standing "clothed and in their right mind," who have drank into the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and have learned of him—who possessing an earnest desire to receive instruction, are determined to obtain it; then we shall see, looking forward to their future condition, the mighty working of Him who is wise in counsel and knowledge. Frequently has the aspersion been advanced by the stoic philosopher, that the Negro was never intended to rise to that scale in society which the other portions of God's family enjoy: spending his time in measuring the Negro's skull, he has endeavoured to deprive him of all the sensibilities of human nature, and rob him of that existence that God intended him to enjoy in eternity—while the humble Missionary has been energetically engaged in instructing his mind: at the time he has been endeavouring to settle the question whether he belongs to the family of man, the Missionary has been transforming him through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and fitting him to belong to the family that resides in heaven: while the one has been busy in endeavouring to undervalue him in the scale of society—through the agency which you, and other sections of the Christian church have employed, the other has been fitting him under the blessings of God to inherit a kingdom that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The humble and glorious effort has been attempted; the influences of the Holy Spirit have descended in a copious shower; the trial has been made, and the result is evident; it has succeeded beyond our largest expectations; incense and a pure offering have ascended from Negro lips and

hearts; and whether instruction has been conveyed to the young or to the old, it has testified, to the delight of the believer, that, however the man may differ in the complexion of the skin, or the formation of the skull, he possesses those sensibilities, and is enabled to make those acquirements, which prove that God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth.

No one who has not had the honour of engaging in missionary employ, with respect to the people to whom I now allude, can have any idea of that intense desire they at present manifest for religious instruction: and the prospect of their emancipation has not in the least lessened this desire. Letters received the week before last from Jamaica confirm every previous statement. A reference to one fact will elucidate what I mean. A few Negroes, the other day, walked twenty-five miles, for the purpose of inviting one of the returned missionaries to preach to them; and in their own energetic way they assured him—"Minister, we have old people on the estate that cannot walk so many miles, or they would gladly come: they are dying every day. Minister, come and tell them of Christ and his salvation." Now, fellow Christians, we know that such a desire to receive religious instruction has been imparted from heaven; that it is not a natural graft of the human mind; that the human mind, unaided by the Spirit of God, is repulsive to all the doctrines of grace: but here we behold persons sunk to the level of the brute, and degraded year after year, oppressed every moment of their existence, except when their eyes are closed in sleep, desiring religious instruction, panting after Christ and him crucified: and ought we not to attribute this to Him who alone can save, to Him who alone can direct, to Him who alone can bless, and who in the Volume of Inspiration has assured us, that however man may degrade Africa, she shall one day lift her dusky hands unto him.

I notice, in the second place, SOME OF THE MEANS THAT HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED FOR THE PURPOSE OF AFFORDING THIS INSTRUCTION. Here it is necessary to carry you back through a lengthened period. The origin of the Missions of the West India Islands is very imperfectly known; but its cause marks so distinctly the hand and finger of Providence, that it is atheism not to perceive it. Though we had the dishonour of first enslaving Africa, we had not the honour of first teaching Africans the way to heaven. About sixty years ago a man was stolen from the land of his forefathers, and immured in one of those watery dungeons called a slave-ship; he was sent to the Coast of America, where he continued a hopeless slave. From the descendants of some who fled from your country, because they could not obtain religious liberty here, he first heard of Christ and him crucified: the news affected his heart, and governed his life. Being impelled by the influence of the Holy Ghost with a restless desire to do good, and not being permitted to do that in America on account of the colour of his skin, he worked, and by some means obtained his freedom. Amidst trials that will not be revealed till Jamaica gives up her dead, and the appalling spectacle shall be presented, of slave, and slave owner standing before the tribunal of a justly offended God—amidst trials unequalled he proclaimed salvation by a crucified Redeemer. It is in some respects pleasing, and in other respects painful, to reflect, that the first chapel that was erected was built on different Lord's days. At the time I speak of, the slaves



had no time to call their own, except the day devoted by the Christian Church to rest. As they laboured they sung the praises of God; while they worked he preached: and thus the first Baptist Chapel was erected in which God was worshipped in that Island. It was my happiness to know that distinguished individual, who will be esteemed in future generations, the Apostle from Africa to Africa. He died in a good old age, triumphing in redeeming love. Amidst the tears and sobs of numbers of his fellow countrymen, I committed his remains to the tomb.

And here let us pause, and admire the Providence which presided in this arrangement. Who would have thought it, what tongue could have spoken the mighty truth, what heart could have conceived the heart-cheering intelligence? Had you beheld that slave, the prey of a fellow man, crossing the deep, bound, and manacled, and fettered—had you seen him toiling under the burning sun at the beck of his task-master, could you have supposed that he was the distinguished individual who was to carry the Gospel to his fellow countrymen, and that that Gospel was to smite off every fetter, and bid the oppressed go free? Though he has died, the Gospel he preached has not died; others have been found who have taught the Negroes the way of God more perfectly, who have led them into the truth as it is in Jesus, who have carried forward the work he so nobly begun. The light of divine truth penetrated the dark recesses of slavery; and slavery not being able to bear the light came forward with all its instruments of cruelty, and with its instruments of torture and persecution: meek, dignified Christianity gazed upon the hideous spectre, and it fled to rise no more. And thus shall every future opposition vanish: however high may be the mountain, however exalted may be the difficulty, which sets itself against the cross of Jesus Christ, it shall either be brought to kiss the Son, or vanish from his sight, when he appears to bring home the nations to himself.

While Christianity has been achieving this victory for the enslaved sons of Africa, it has, at the same time, been raising up a set of men eminently qualified to fulfil the predictions revealed in the Word of God. And here my Christian brethren, I invite your most serious attention, that, in the secret retirement of the closet, when we are far away from you, when we are remembered by you, in those holy moments when you are pleading with your heavenly Father, pray that that result to which I have now alluded, may be brought about by Him who is excellent in counsel and mighty in working. Those who may be acquainted with Africa, know well that European labourers cannot live there; that however untiring be our personal labours, that however energetic our enterprise, that there we cannot live; that such is the pestilential influence of the climate, that the European goes there only to wither and to die. But here you behold a race of Christians rising up in the house of bondage, trained by God in the school of affliction, and on whom the sword of persecution has rested: they bear on their backs the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thousands of them will bear those marks to the grave, and probably wear them in heaven. These being trained in the school of adversity, know well the consolations flowing from the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ: that Christianity which found them in sorrow, has now lifted them in the scale of society; possessing an untiring zeal in the service of their Master, they will soon, we trust, be fitted to return to their native country, and there preach salvation through the blood of the Son

of God. And who can tell but in the wise arrangements of that Providence with which our heavenly Father governs this world, he has permitted our heavy trials to overtake us, not merely that slavery might be destroyed, but that the Christian Church might be convinced, that, though the colour of his skin were black, the Negro would do well to grace the triumphal car of Immanuel when he goes forth to bring home Africa to himself. However imperfectly, these people speak your own language, some of them still retain a knowledge of their own; and you know with what facility we catch the idiom of our mother tongue when we return to the land that gave us birth. Here you behold men of untiring energy: the sun may shine upon them in Africa, but it will not hurt them; it is their home: the moon may shed its sickening beams, but it will produce no baneful influence on them; their constitutions enured to a tropical climate, are not affected by it. Burning with intense desire to promote the glory of God, we trust that numbers of them will soon be found, ready and willing to sail up the mighty streams of their native land, there unfurl the banner of that cross, and compensate Africa for the wrongs inflicted upon its ill-used tribes.

It is when we connect the results of the Emancipation Bill with the promise of our heavenly Father, that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God"—that frequently in the school of affliction he prepares some of his most polished arrows; it is when we view these things that our hearts rejoice; that our spirits rise up in holy gratitude to him, that the year of jubilee has at length arrived, and the bondage of the slave is over.

There are, too, collateral circumstances that tend to elucidate this point. Oh that some devoted man may be found, that some one would give himself with all the energy of his soul, and with all the capability of his mind, to this important subject. A short time since a slave ship was wrecked on the coast of Jamaica, and from that ship about one hundred and fifty captives were released. They found a refuge—where? They found it in a Baptist Chapel, in one of those houses of God which the infuriated whites had not destroyed: they entered at one door slaves, they emerged from the other as free as you. They had just come from Africa; they still know their native tongue in which they were born. We have some who have left the same country forty years, who know the English language pretty correctly. Now if some devoted men would give themselves to the object of learning their language, through the medium of those who have left their country, and who still retain a knowledge of our language, might we not hope the first step would be made, of carrying the Gospel to a land of so much interest, a land of so much darkness and cruelty, the land emphatically of death, that shall one day bloom with all the verdure of heaven?

"Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God." If we do not engage in the plan some others will. And there are, not only in Jamaica, but there are those in Africa, who have made the same joyful and happy effort. The geographical problem has been solved by one who has fallen a victim to the persecutions of the diabolical slave-owners—the discovery of the river Niger; that discovery which has been just made in time for Africans to go back. One recently returned from that embassy assured me, that three hundred and fifty miles up that river, there is a town, occupying a space almost as large as Liverpool, untrod by European foot, except his own—that there, being confined by

sickness for three months, he lost not a single article, though they were extremely poor; that they worship one God, but to them he is an unknown God; they know not how to serve him; they know not that he sent his Son to die for them. Ignorantly they raise their voices unto him; but no idols yet pollute their tents. Oh, if in a few years ten or twenty of our black converts should go there—if plying up that mighty stream, they may be permitted to plant the banner of the cross in that large city, and there tell of Him who died, of Him who stretched out his hand unto them; and to assure them that he is no respecter of persons; then should we say, while we gratefully adore, “He has done all things well.” Though secret things belong to him, though his designs stretch over a large compass, he is too wise to err, he is too good to be unkind. If, fellow Christians, when the last stain is washed by the returning tide—if when the last moan that the captive has uttered has retired with the breeze, there shall come a voice from the Isles of the West, speaking better things than the blood of Abel—there come those who proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison-door to them that are bound—if there are found there those who shall tell of Him who, though he was rich, yet for Africa’s sake became poor, that they through his poverty might become rich; then shall we say indeed, Africa is compensated for all the wrongs that have been heaped so unjustly upon her.

Then, my dear brethren, may I urge upon you the necessity of making this the frequent subject of your prayers? May I urge upon you the duty of bearing them frequently at the footstool of divine grace, pouring out your hearts unto God that men may be raised up; that in the selection of them we may be guided by infinite wisdom, and directed by untiring love; that men of untiring energy and singularly devoted minds shall proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus, and proclaim His love who died that man might live, to those who now sit in the region and in the very shadow of death.

“Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God.” Delightful truth! Now she stretches out her hand unto the devil: now she stretches out her hands, and those hands are bound by those who wear the human shape, but have infernal hearts; now she stretches out her hands to every one who lives to prey: but there is a time coming when she shall exhibit a far different picture; when she shall bloom in all the verdure of holiness, and exhibit all the loveliness of that Christianity which is destined alike to bless the swarthy African and the enlightened European.

Leaving for a moment, fellow Christians, this subject, may I direct your attention to our mission there? As I shall not have another opportunity of doing so, I have chosen this, or I would have directed your attention to a far different subject: but the individual who now addresses you, in company with a highly esteemed brother, will leave, in the course of three or four days at most, their native country. May I then, on behalf of him, and on behalf of my ownself, on behalf of our wives and little ones, find an interest in your fervent prayers? The scene that will soon be presented to our eyes will be of another description: there are many there who know not God, and obey not the voice of his Son; there are unreasonable and wicked men there, who have not faith; and the circumstances in which your missionaries will be placed will be peculiarly interesting: they will need much self-devotion, they will need much



untiring, energetic zeal. You know, fellow Christians, where alone this can come down; from Him who hitherto has guided us by his counsel, and who eventually, we trust, shall receive us into glory. Pray for us, then, we most earnestly entreat you; lift up your supplications to your Heavenly Father. The next time you meet to pray for the prosperity of the Gospel, we shall be on the mighty ocean. Oh, then, let us have an interest in your prayers, that in carrying forward this design, nearest and dearest to our hearts on earth—I mean the evangelization of Africa—that men may be raised up who will go forth for the purpose of teaching them the knowledge of Him who died that they might live. And your Heavenly Father will hear you; he heard you two years ago, when the clouds were thick, when the storm was violent, when you knew not which way to look, when men's hearts failed them for fear, when the thick clouds of adversity were over us; then you united together, then you besieged heaven with your prayers; and your Father heard you, and your Father answered you, and your Father blessed you: “He stayed the rough wind in the day of his East wind:” he suffered not one hair of the head to fall to the earth of any of his servants; he protected them in every danger, he secured them in every distress, he cheered them in every perplexity; he made darkness light around them, and crooked things straight: these things he did. Still, fellow Christians, we need your prayers, we need your supplications. Oh, if there is one thing we require on earth more than the approbation of God as missionaries, it is this; it is the prayers of the humble, and the sincere, and the devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, I beseech you, remember us in your supplications, that we may be faithful to death; that whatever the future difficulties in which we are placed, that whatever the future trials, whether in prosperity or whether in adversity, supported by our Heavenly Father, we may still maintain the unequal fight against the Prince of the power of the air, or those earthly emissaries he may employ for the purpose of carrying forward his malignant designs.

I have thought, perhaps, you would like to hear some of the latest intelligence which I have received from the Island of Jamaica; and I will close this address by directing your attention for a moment or two to the accounts from the different places there. Many of my fellow Christians, and some perhaps in this congregation, were afraid, that when Satan came in like a flood our converts would make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. I am happy to say, that the same power that has been protecting us has been protecting them also. In my brother Burchell's church, a thousand have been re-examined, one by one: they have all been found faithful; they have not made shipwreck of faith; they have met again at the table of the Lord, and are rejoicing in the goodness of their God. Not that they could meet altogether; their chapel being demolished, they had only a house. Three hundred came in, and partook of the feast we call the Lord's Supper, and five hundred remained outside: when they had received it three hundred others came, and they partook of the feast, and retired: two hundred others were then on the outside in the sun, patiently waiting, and then they came in, and heard of Him who died that they might live. With respect to the station I formerly occupied, and which in all probability I shall again occupy in two months from this time, the latest intelligence is this; that every Sabbath there are nearly four hundred outside the shed



which has been erected, unable to get admission: and many Christian friends are obliged to stop at home, in order that the poor slaves (not slaves now) who have come from the country, may hear on the Lord's day what they cannot hear in the week, of salvation through the blood of Christ. This will heighten your joy that money has been afforded by the unexampled benevolence of the Christian Church, to erect those chapels in which they shall have plenty of room to hear of Him who died that they might live. Other stations are equally prosperous; our heavenly Father is indeed preventing us by his mercy.

When I look at the state of things, I am overcome with his kindness, and scarcely know how to express the feelings of thanksgiving that rise in my mind unto Him who has protected the people, and has secured them in the hour of trial, and who is thus fitting them for future usefulness in his Church. They love Christ as well as we love him; they serve him as faithfully; they love to tell of his goodness and of his loving-kindness: and I hope to see the day, when numbers shall be found in their native country, giving a useful lesson to Satan and all his emissaries, that vain are all their attempts to obstruct the trophies of the Redeemer's kingdom; that all their attempts to overthrow the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth shall recoil on their own heads.

Then, fellow Christians, pray for us, that this may be the case. Pray for your fellow Christians there: pray that God would raise up those men that are needed; and that, if it be necessary, they should be accompanied by those who are most acquainted with missionary enterprise, that he would fit and qualify such men. And if you will pray that he would fit and qualify him who addresses you, that he would give him the honour of taking them to Africa, then you would render him a service indeed. I should be happy (but I esteem it too great an honour for God to confer upon me) if after my chapel is erected, I might be permitted to sail up the mighty Niger, there take a canoe full of pious devoted labourers, live with them there till they have planted the standard of the cross there, and then return to my beloved people, and celebrate with them all the goodness of God.

Finally, brethren, farewell. "Pray for us, that the word of God may have free course, and be glorified;" and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith. May God in his infinite mercy command his blessing! May he bless you as a church; may he bless you in your minister, and make his word effectual to the conversion of those who have not hitherto loved God, and the establishment of the Christian faith, until you meet your pastor in heaven, and celebrate the praises of Him, who though he by adversity proved us, guides us still to his own right hand!

## THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

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REV. T. J. JUDKIN, A.M.

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“Stand in awe, and sin not.”—PSALM, iv. 4.

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MAN is an accountable creature to his God. The soul is an imperishable thing. The glories of heaven, and the terrors of hell, are not the visions of a dark fancy, but impending realities. A great day is coming when the blast of the trumpet shall awaken the dead, and we shall all appear at the judgment bar of Christ, to be tried by his pure and searching law, and abide the issue of that scrutiny in eternal sorrow or eternal joy. Life, the period assigned for preparation, is unquestionably short, and may become much shorter by some sudden and mysterious approach of the angel of death.

These things are of common assent, are matters of popular belief and popular confession: they are upon the lips of all Christians, whatever be the variety of their distinction; upon the *lips*, I should say, with almost an excluding emphasis, for, while the lips speak, the heart is often an infidel to what the lips utter. The heart, as the great mover and instigator of the actions, fights with the words of the mouth, gives but too often a standing lie to its confessions, is a recreant from the law, the word, and the testimony, and an apostate from the faith. The great multitude live as though they were not accountable beings; as though the soul perishes with the perishing body; as though the eyes of God were shut, and regarded not; as though heaven and hell were the fables of the enthusiast, and the coming judgment a solemn mockery, invented only to frighten weak minds. With a consistency so perversely unfixed, and the passions so inveterately fixed, their minds follow the law of a degraded nature: having eyes they see not; having ears they hear not; having hearts they will not understand. And it is from such a state of delusion, that amongst a thousand other passages and appeals in the word of God, my text would recall to a holy, to a wise, and to a happy practice, under the influence of the blessed Spirit. “Stand in awe, and sin not.”

In uttering the word “sin,” how few are there amongst men, even though seriously minded, who connect with it sentiments and feelings corresponding to its own true force and signification! How few whose sensibilities are even awakened by the recurrence of the word, even though these sensibilities are always ready to melt and to sympathize at the mention of ordinary ills. And yet this is a word pregnant with all the terrible calamities which flesh is heir to: this is a word that unparadised our world, and is daily raining down curses upon ourselves and children: this is a word which makes even a most merciful and

a most forbearing God angry, calling forth the destroying emissaries of his wrath: this is a word which originated and which imposed the sufferings and exacted the blood of the holy Lamb of God: this is a word that comes sounding up from the depths and the hollownesses of eternity in the wailings of accursed spirits: this is a word by whose seduction and influence the arch-fiend of evil seduces the souls of God's people, and binds them down sometimes with the chains of an eternity of darkness. I say it ought surely to become a matter of self-reproach, that the bare term, so terrible for its power, so affecting in its consequences, should pass as an empty sound; while the merest breath, touching our present hopes and fears, at once chills our inmost feelings, and calls into vigour our best strength. And it should become a matter, my Christian friends, of unfeigned and frequent prayer to the Holy Spirit of God, that by his gracious influences our hearts may be more alive to the impressions of religious truth; that we may pause and watch over all the words of Holy Scripture, as the words of God, inwardly digesting them to our spiritual improvement, for Christ's sake.

"Stand in awe, and sin not." I would, under God, give solemn weight to this spiritual exhortation, after the following form. First, the nature of sin; second, the consequence of sin; thirdly, I would revert to the recorded judgments against sin; and fourthly, I would take a view of the character of Him against whom sin is committed.

#### First, THE NATURE OF SIN.

Stand in awe at the suggestion of a sinful purpose: for sin is a *gathering evil*: its first indulgence ends not in itself, but the gratification strengthens the desire, and the remonstrances of conscience, that were loud and vehement in the first instance, become weaker and weaker with the day. No folly is more ruinous than that of supposing that a single compliance with unholy impurity can satisfy: no absurdity is greater than that of imagining our already weakened resolutions can a second time assist with greater strength, make more vigorous resistance than at the first. No, the earliest act, the first act, paves the way for the second; the second for the third; acquiring force to force, till the hand of restraint loses all its power, and the man becomes self-abandoned to his vicious inclinations.

The first act, too, will often make a second necessary; for sins, like woes, cluster; they never stand alone, they make a second necessary, by placing us in situations which we have not contemplated. Thus, in the whisper of suspicion the lie is readily coined in the heart; and, like St. Peter, we add to our original guilt the thrice repeated denial, and it may be accompanied with the oath and with the blasphemy. We know not where our sins may carry us; to what fearful depths of hardness and of atrocity they may lead. The covetous desire prompts to the secret theft, and, upon some strong emergency, this makes way for the open daring, and the man becomes the public robber; and, though entertaining at the time no idea of personal violence, yet being perhaps exasperated by unexpected opposition, or challenged by a voice which he knows, he imposes upon his guilty soul the weight and the curse of a brother's life. We know not, I say, where sin shall carry us. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

Sin is a *deceiving power*, never appears as it is, but always wears a mask.

It allures under the semblance of beauty, hiding its serpent's length among the roses. It persuades that the mere taste of the apple is but a light and a venial thing, that it can be but a small matter whether we consent or forbear; and by such insinuations the fears of conscience are quelled, the judgment is blinded, the imagination filled with false images, and the poison enters into the soul. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

Sin is a *gradual hardening of the heart*. Every fresh act of sin, is the shutting up of some pore of moral sensibility. At the first a sense of shuddering comes over the spirit, lest the crime should be known; then its repetition gradually lessens and deadens the impression of the enormity of the sin, and the sense of shame becomes extinct, and there is even a glorying in our own dishonour; and the conscience becomes seared and dead, to be quickened only, perhaps, at the hour when the soul shall cast about in vain for the prayer of repentance, and sink without a hope of mercy. Our sins are remembered at the last; they cling to us at the last. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

Sin is *ineffaceable*. The action that is done cannot be undone; no human power can recall it; its testimony is at once given in, and its punishment annexed in the book of the recording angel. No tears can wash it away from the soul, as though it never had been; it must at all times appear there to the eye of self-reflection, even as the troubler of our peace. It must haunt, as it were a spectre, to affrighten the soul from its rest. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

Sin is a *contagious evil*. It is not confined to ourselves: it does not live and die with the man; it affects those about us. Its example multiplies, and spreads mischief and sorrow: and however lightly we may think of the subject at present, however we may shrink from the idea of giving pain to those who are the nearest and the dearest to us, a day will arrive, when many a child, though tenderly beloved now, shall have to point to its father, and many a wife shall have to look to her husband, as the immediate cause of their sorrow; and the father or the husband shall awaken to a frenzied consciousness of the justice of the thought, that even, as it were, with his own hand, he has set the seal to the doom and the woe of the dearest he loved on earth. In the parable of our blessed Lord, our sensibilities are touched by the power of his sympathy, as we listen to the importunity of the afflicted soul, who besought Abraham to send to the five brethren of his father's house, lest they also should come into the place of torment. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

In adverting to THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN, let me give power, under God, to this exhortation.

And what are these? Generally the loss of health, the loss of life, the loss of reputation, the loss of friends, the loss of fortitude in trials, the loss of consolation under suffering, the loss of peace in a world of strife, the loss of hope in nature's most despairing hour, the loss of a calm assurance at the last.

But not to dwell severally on these things, give me your hand, young man, and as we walk the world together, we shall find a too mournful illustration of these truths. That poor creature, pale and sunk, wasted and miserable, who sells her soul to-night for the price of to-morrow's bread, was once as happy, to all appearance, as life could make her—was the life and hope of her parents, was her father's joy, and her mother's pride. What is she now? The forsaken,



the abandoned; an object of scorn and reproach—only in her sex a woman. What are her own feelings, as she communes with her heart in her sick chamber, while the images of the past come over her—of parental watchings, of parental attention and care; of the father's protecting love, and of the mother's anxious tenderness? What her hopes and feelings if she casts up strange events of death? Surely her cries are all in vain, while her fears become stronger and stronger. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

Another form is sitting in the gloom of the prison-house. He was caressed and flattered by many; the idol of fortune, it may be: but in early life he mixed with the profligate and the vain, and fell into bad habits and courses, and insensibly grew worse and worse; till at length he resorted to fraud and violence to repair his broken fortunes, and he was given over to a reprobate mind; and at last, it may be, the sin of a brother's blood was on his soul, and he meets an ignominious end. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

That grave is the grave of a suicide. Instead of finding consolation from the promises and the religion of Jesus, and cultivating, through prayer and through obedience, the virtues of Jesus' blessed life, walking humbly before God, and receiving the chastisements of his hand with meekness and resignation, as wise and merciful, he minded earthly things; he brooded over his troubles, till disappointment worked itself into the frenzies of despair, and shrinking from the lesser evils of life, he put in peril the safety of his immortal soul, rushing into the presence of God with an infuriated eye, and with the crime of blood on his own head. Oh, "stand in awe, and sin not."

Now let us enter together into the chambers of death. I draw no picture. A man whose whole life, to all human appearance, has been one course of indelicacy, trifling, and sin; who has given himself to intemperance; who has neglected all the holy ordinances of religion, has prostituted the sacred hours of God's appointed Sabbaths to worldly amusements and avocations; has been by turns a drunkard and a Sabbath-breaker, a profane swearer and an idolater: such an one sends to us in his last hours to give to him—by virtue, as he may think, of our priestly office—consolation and joy; to assure his soul at the last, to sooth him with assurances of peace. And, humanly speaking, we would do this, but we dare not; we cannot. We would offer willingly our prayers; but we may not mock the dying man with groundless expectation; we may not feed him with hollow hope, crying "Peace," when there is no peace; and blessing him whom the Lord hath cursed. We shrink from doing this; if we did not, his blood would be upon our souls. No situation can be more distressing, no thought more awful than this—that as the tree falls so must it lie. It would be an act of cruelty, perhaps an unnecessary infliction upon him, to say this to him; for his own consciousness rises upon him, in awful justice, and repeats, with a deeper power of utterance, the same truth. It will be for you, young man, or you, young woman, as you witness the agonies of the departed spirit, the strenuous graspings for life, to know that the shuddering ear receives its appeals for human help to no purpose; the last ineffectual struggle, the last warm vein rallying the powers of life against the hand of death. The few indistinct and incoherent words that choke the utterance, are 'Time lost: without heaven, without hope; eternity, a suffering eternity, begun.' These words are succeeded by an awful stillness, and the spirit has

passed away." I say, young man, after witnessing such a scene, and as you earnestly gaze on the face, it becomes you, surely, with deep repentance before God, to acknowledge your sins, to acknowledge the weakness of your past resolutions, and to pray for his grace for the future, that you may walk in newness of life. Shall not the Psalmist's words come upon you with a more restraining power as you think of these things? "Stand in awe, and sin not."

As you ponder over THE RECORDED JUDGMENTS OF GOD, this fear will strengthen itself. What is the infirmity of sin on which your thoughts now are fixed—*now*, as I am desiring you? What shews itself at this moment with distinctness to your minds? Do you cherish envy or revenge against your brother, enmity and strife? Keep in view that burning mark upon the brow of the wandering Cain: and "stand in awe, and sin not." Mock you the messages of heaven, and the warnings of the Christian minister? Think of the roar of the water, that testified the dying cry of those who set Noah at nought, when he preached to them righteousness: "stand in awe, and sin not." Are covetousness and dishonesty your prevailing sins? Remember the leprosy that clave to Gehazi, and the punishment of Achan, who hid the treasures in the tent: and "stand in awe, and sin not." Are yours the practices of the adulterer, who waiteth for the midnight, and saith, "No eye shall see me?" Image to thyself King David trembling before Nathan the prophet, when he heard the story of the poor man's lambs, and when he heard the whole truth, "*Thou art the man.*" "Stand in awe, and sin not." Are you erecting idols in your hearts, worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator? Remember the earthquake and Korah's idolatry; and "stand in awe, and sin not." Are you sunk in sensual indulgence, in feasting, and revelling, and forgetfulness of God? Think of the vision of the hand upon the wall; or of his state who had promised to eat, and drink, and to be merry, and who at midnight heard, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." "Stand in awe, and sin not." Is yours an excess of parental indulgence, in all its want of restraint? Look back at the moment when Eli sat at the gate, hearing that his sons were dead, and that the wrath of God was upon them, he fell back from his seat, and broke his neck, being old and heavy. "Stand in awe, and sin not." Is yours the practice of deceit and lying? Think of the awful end of Ananias and Sapphira, who fell dead at the Apostles' feet; and "stand in awe, and sin not." Are you careless, are you indifferent to the preached word? Oh, think how Eutychus fell from the upper chamber window asleep, when St. Paul was preaching. "Stand in awe, and sin not." Do you make denial of the Lord's name? Ponder over the compunctions of his soul who went out and wept bitterly: think of the end of that man who went out and hanged himself. "Stand in awe, and sin not." Are yours the crimes of insincerity and hypocrisy? Are you now wearing the mask to deceive your neighbour? Remember the curse your blessed Lord uttered against the hypocrite and deceiver. "Stand in awe, and sin not."

I might multiply instances answering to your several sins; but I would forbear, leaving you to search your own minds as they bow beneath **your own** convictions.

Lastly, AGAINST WHOM DO YOU SIN? A God, a merciful God, who has watched over and protected your persons to this time. Against a father who is ever extending to you the arms of his mercy and love. Against a king who shall punish you; against a judge whose sentence will be irreversible. Against the will and intent of his blessed Son, who came from heaven to save, and to make alive from the dead; who on your account went through a life of unheard-of privations and sorrows to be consummated in the cruellest of deaths. Against your Redeemer, who even now intercedes for you at the right hand of the Living God, with groanings that cannot be uttered. Against the interests of your immortal souls in their present and their eternal duration.

Oh, time is very short: a few hours, compared with the world to come, is given you, to prepare under God, and through the assistance of his Spirit, for your everlasting condition. And sickness, I have said, or accident, or any other adversity, may find life still shorter. An eternity spreads itself before you, with its ages rolling on ages in endless succession, as a land of unchangeable peace, or as a region of inconceivable sorrow. "Stand in awe, and sin not." Strive while it is day to make your interest, your reconciliation with God, through the influence of the blessed Redeemer of man, with a living faith in your heart, cleaving to his cross, and showing its purity and power in the fruits of a holy life.

Thus may you attain a new heart; even the heart which is given by the Holy Spirit of God, who listens to the prayer of all who call upon him—who is more ready to hear than you are to pray—who is more inclined to give, than you are to receive; and yours shall thus be a new heart; and you shall receive the great and the glorious truths of the Gospel in all their simplicity and power, and give to God that obedience, which through Christ shall be the blessedness of eternity. Amen.

## THE EXAMPLE OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

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IF the Queen of Sheba went from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon—probably from Ethiopia, then deemed the utmost part of the earth from Jerusalem—that she might obtain instruction as to her own duties and obligations, that her own mind might be impressed and informed; what ought to be our feelings in relation to Him who is greater than Solomon?

She went, notwithstanding the distance of her residence. She had a long journey to perform, with little of those facilities and accommodation for traveling which we enjoy. And yet she went all the way to Jerusalem that she might hear and witness the wisdom of Solomon. Will not this procedure on her part condemn those of us to whom God has brought nigh his word? You have his ordinances; his Sabbaths are every week enjoyed by you—his house opened for your reception—his word in a language you can understand. That word is nigh you, and the Gospel is brought near to you. Are you neglecting it? Are you taking no pains to understand it? Do you let Sabbaths and opportunities pass by unimproved? The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment against you.

She went, notwithstanding all the anxieties of her public station. She might have pleaded, "I have so much to do, so many cares devolving upon me that I cannot go." But she acted on different principles, and was well rewarded for her labour. Can you, then, plead any cares, any anxieties, any occupations, as a reason why you should not make every effort, submit to every sacrifice, go through every necessary difficulty, in order to attend to the wisdom of the Son of God—in order to listen to the oracles of truth—in order to seek the things that belong to your everlasting peace? Say not, "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Your attention to these things will not be interfered with by your supreme attention to the things which belong to your everlasting peace. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

She went, though uninvited. There was no offer, no appeal made to her. Mere report, general testimony that she heard, induced her to go. Can you say you are uninvited? What is this Word but the record of invitation, full of mercy and love? What is the ministry but the ministry of reconciliation, exhibiting inducements and considerations to bring you to seek at once the knowledge of this greater than Solomon? Will she not rise up in the judgment against you?

She went to hear the wisdom of a mortal, at best fallible, and who after all was guilty of sad and criminal defection. But *you* are invited to listen to, and receive the instructions of heavenly wisdom, of eternal life. Then recollect how the Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment against the men of this generation; because a greater than Solomon is here—in the Bible, in the testimony of heavenly wisdom, in the mysteries of divine truth.

REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D.



## THE HUMILIATION AND GRACE OF CHRIST.

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REV. C. BRADLEY, A.M.

ST. JAMES'S CHAPEL, CLAPHAM, AUGUST 24, 1834.

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"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—2 COR. viii. 9.

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HERE, brethren, in these few words is the Gospel, its whole sum and substance. If we rightly understand only this one text, we understand enough to make us happy for ever; if we really believe the precious truths it contains, we *shall* be happy for ever; there is a power in them that can save our souls alive.

The words offer four particulars for our consideration; and the first of them is this—THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. "He was rich," says the Apostle.

In saying this he plainly asserts *his pre-existence*: I mean his existence somewhere before he came into our world. For where, brethren, on earth was he rich? Where are the treasures he renounced here? Shall we look for them in the stable at Bethlehem, or go in search of them to the cottage of Joseph at Nazareth? We shall find no riches there. Regard the Saviour as a mere man, coming into existence for the first time into our world, and then the Apostle's words have no meaning at all in them; they are such words as none but a man bereft of reason would have written or thought of.

But there is more than pre-existence in the words; we shall rest short of their meaning unless we ascribe to the Lord Jesus Christ *much greatness and much glory in eternity*. He was not only there in that unseen world, but he was "rich." Now this term when applied to a fellow-creature we understand at once. We call him rich who, besides having what is enough for his own wants, has the means of gratifying many of his desires; and we call him richer still who, after having satisfied his own wants and desires, has the means of satisfying the wants and desires of others. Imagine, then, a Being, inhabiting a world of glory with all its resources at his command, and all its immense dominions owning him as their Lord. Conceive of him as rich in heaven, and rich there in heavenly things; rich in the estimation of glorious angels—so rich that they go to him for all they need, and depend upon him for all they desire, and mean to do so for ever, and know that they can do so for ever, without exhausting or even diminishing his boundless treasures. Look on the Lord Jesus Christ as the light of heaven, the source of all its blessings, and all its glory, and all its joy—and then look at the mighty universe, and take a survey, brethren, of star

after star, world after world—whatever you see happy or excellent in any one of them, trace it all to this amazing Being. It came from him at first; it was his work, it is still his property: so that, make it over to him, lay it down at his feet, you have not given him anything; you have but returned to him that which was his own. And then go one step further: imagine him as needing nothing of all he possesses, so inconceivably rich in himself, as to be independent of heaven and earth and all that they contain: incapable of having his happiness augmented by the treasures of the whole universe, and equally incapable of having it impaired by their loss. Conceive of a Being as having all things, and yet needing none.

But it is useless to labour thus: labour as we will we can form no one adequate idea of the original glory of the Lord Jesus. It was infinite; and none but an infinite mind can comprehend it. All we can say is, he was God—the self-existent, boundless Jehovah; no lofty angel, no inferior deity, but “very God of very God;” possessing in himself all the fulness of the divine perfections; sharing with his eternal Father in all he was and all he enjoyed. Such *was* Jesus Christ.

But the text calls on us to view him in a very different condition: it sets before us, in the second place, **THE STATE TO WHICH HE HUMILED HIMSELF.** “He became poor,” it tells us.

But we may ask, How poor? Not as men often become so, by the loss of their former wealth; Christ as God could lose nothing, he never parted, he never could part, for a single moment, with his divine fulness or any one portion of it; it is as inseparable from him as his own existence. What then, you may say, are we to understand by this term? Simply this, that the Eternal God concealed, veiled this glory; that he assumed, and appeared in, a new character, and that a character infinitely below his own. The Apostle does not expressly say so, but he evidently speaks of him as man, though still in fact the Everlasting Jehovah; still rich as ever in the plenitude of his Godhead, but allying that Godhead to one of his creatures; taking on himself the nature of that creature, and manifesting himself in his form: and thus he became poor. The same Being who was rich as God, made himself poor, simply by this one act of becoming man. The single circumstance of his taking upon him our nature was an unutterable humiliation. We can understand but little of it, brethren; our situation blinds us; we cannot send our eyes half high enough in the heavens to know what a stoop the great God made when he stooped down to our world.

But let us think for a moment. Of all God’s rational creatures man is the very lowest. We know not how many orders of beings there are above us, but we do know this, that there are none below us. Now could it have been conceived that the great Jehovah was about to take on him a creature’s form, we could tell at once what form we should give him; we should have gone to the summit of creation, and placed him on a level with the greatest archangel; and then there would have been an act of condescension; the greatness of the act would at once have amazed and confounded us. But how did God act? He took not on him the nature of angels; he passed down through one order of beings after another, till he sunk into the very depths of his rational creatures, and took on him the nature of *man*. He could not go lower, but he descended and descended

still, till he went the lowest. And observe—our nature, not as he gave it to man at first, but our nature as we know it; in one sense, our fallen nature—its weakness, its liability to pain, and misery, and death; save this one thing, its pollution by sin, he took on him every thing connected with it that branded it with shame and dishonour.

And we must go lower yet. View him even as a man, he was poor; *poor even among poor men*. For observe, he assumed our nature, not in its highest, but in its very lowest condition. No unearthly palace was let down from the skies to be his dwelling-place; no monarch was driven from his throne to make room for him to sit on it: a stable was his first habitation, and a manger his first bed; the wife of a poor carpenter was his parent, fishermen his companions, women in the humblest ranks of life his benefactors; they “ministered to him,” we read, “of their substance;” for he needed their alms. Hear his own touching description of his poverty: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but (what have I?) the Son of man has not where to lay his head.” And observe in what a simple, yet striking manner, the same fact is intimated by St. John: “Every man,” says he; in the last verse of the seventh chapter (speaking of the dispersion of the multitude)—“Every man went to his own house.” And why tell us this? we may ask; a circumstance so unimportant: what matters it to us where they went? It seems as though he told us this to make us notice the next thing he tells us, in the first verse of the following chapter: “Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.” “Every man went to his own house:” among these persecuting Jews there was not one, at the close of the day, who had not a habitation to return to: but Jesus alone was obliged to seek refuge and a dwelling-place in the rocks of a mountain; he had “not where to lay his head.”

And amidst all this he was *poor in reputation, in character*. “He made himself of no reputation.” “He was despised and rejected of men.” In heaven, but a little before, he had been the object of adoration to angels; they adored him as they adored no other—yea, they adored none but him. *Now* miserable men scorn him: such abject beings as you and I are, though not worthy to breathe his air, or see his sun—we hid, in loathing and disgust, our faces from him. Men derided him, persecuted him, spat upon him, thought his very presence in this world a degradation to it, and wished to sweep him away from it.

Above all this, he was *poor in consolation*. What matters poverty, we may say—what matters shame and ill treatment, if God is shining into our hearts, and giving us heavenly consolation there? Even we ourselves, weak as we are, only give us these consolations, and we can bear anything. But there were times when the Blessed Jesus was almost a stranger to these comforts. Support, indeed, he had constantly from his Father, and at times, indeed, much serenity and peace: but he seems to have received less abiding solace in his affliction, less of the outpouring of heavenly joy than many of his people; and he seems to have suffered much more than any of them from the absence of it. In comparison with what he endured on this account, all his other troubles seemed light as air to him. He felt the treachery of Judas; he was doubtless cut to the heart by the cowardice of Peter, and the ingratitude of his other disciples: but, galling as these things were to his holy soul, they wrung from him no

complaint. At length, however, his Father forsook him: and then indeed he was poor: he could not bear poverty like this: it forced from him—not in the hour of bodily ease, mark you, but amidst all the disquietude and anguish of the cross—in the hour when we might have said he could only be alive to the pangs of his expiring nature—the absence of divine consolation forced from him that heart-rending cry, “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

And he sunk lower yet: he “bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” *He died a sinner’s death, and laid himself down in a sinner’s form, in a sinner’s grave.* Here was poverty indeed. I need not say, brethren, that death is humbling, even to degraded and miserable man: no one can look on it without feeling that there is something there that abases even miserable beings. But for the Lord of Life, for the King of Glory to become a mere mass of clay, a thing hereof of life and consciousness, that which they who loved it most, buried out of their sight—who can comprehend such a thought? Who can fathom or measure it?

But let us go on to the third point: **THE END CHRIST HAD IN VIEW IN THIS UNPARALLELED HUMILIATION**—the object he aimed to accomplish by it. “For our sakes,” says the text, “he became poor, *that we through his poverty might be rich.*”

Observe here, first, *our natural condition intimated*; the condition in which you and I entered the world, and in which many of us still continue. It is set forth as a state of poverty; and it is really so—a state of extreme, utter poverty; complete destitution. I refer not to the things that can serve the body: God may have given us enough of them, and more than enough to last for the few short years the body may need them: I refer to the never-dying soul—to our wants as rational and immortal beings—to our situation as creatures who are going into a state of existence far away from the world, and from all the world contains. In this life we are poor indeed; so poor, that in all the wide universe, look where we will, we can call nothing our own but sin and wretchedness. *Poverty* is indeed too feeble a word to convey even the very faintest idea of our forlorn condition. We are not only destitute of all good—we are full of all evil, involved in difficulties from which we cannot extricate ourselves, and overwhelmed with burdens which we cannot shake off or bear. A man, you are aware, may be poor, but yet owe nothing to any man. Sin, however, is a positive debt. We have a debt to pay, and a debt that will assuredly be demanded of us, and we have nothing whatever to answer the demand. Or, worse still, a man may be poor, and even in debt, and yet be healthy and strong, so that by his labour he may obtain his bread, and even, in the end, disentangle himself from his perplexities. But not so we: sin withers us; it is a disease as well as a debt; it is the sickness of the soul, something that paralyzes the soul, that renders it both unable and unwilling to make any one effort for its own release. It stupifies the soul, brethren; it fevers us; it renders us insensible to our own situation and circumstances: so that, though we talk about our souls and eternity, we naturally never care about them, nor ever act or feel with reference to them. We are in a stupor, the delirium of a dream, and a dream that nothing but death can disturb. You remember the Laodicean Church: “I am rich,” she said, “and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.” It is the



language of human nature ; it has been the language of every heart that is now beating in this place ; it is in too many instances its language still : “ I am rich ; I am increased in goods ; I have need of nothing.” But what says God to us ? “ Wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Yes : *wretched*, when your hearts are swelling with what you call happiness ; wretched, amidst the song and the dance, and all the delights that folly and thoughtlessness can impart ; wretched, when you just grasp the things you love best, and say “ Now I am satisfied for ever : ” “ Wretched,” says God, even then. And *poor* too : poor, amidst your silver and gold ; poor, among your hoarded thousands ; poor, in your spacious homes and your costly furniture ; poor, while swelling with pride on account of your wealth in your counting-houses, and surrounded by your business. And *blind*, too : as ignorant, naturally, of all that is worth knowing, as the brute beasts that perish. And *naked*, also : naked as sin can strip you : exposed amidst gospel light and gospel privileges to all the dangers of your lost condition—as much so, while out of Christ, as the idolater and the heathen ; not like a man clothed and fenced from the wintry storm, but like a man left in that storm, bare and helpless, with not a garment to cover him, nor anything to shield him from its pitiless blast. “ Wretched,” says God, “ and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

NOW THE END OF OUR LORD'S INTERPOSITION ON OUR BEHALF was not to confirm this state of things, but to alter it : it was, we read, to make us “ rich : ” that is, to put us in possession, not merely of all that we need as rational and immortal beings, as creatures of urgent wants and an endless existence ; but to supply our necessities so abundantly, to heap on us so much more than we need, that no desire shall be left ungratified, that even in God's estimation, that even in the heavenly world we shall be called happy, and not accounted so simply, but actually be so ; that we shall be in heaven, not paupers and pensioners, but seated on high in heaven among the lofty and great, rejoicing in all the enriched riches and glory. Christ came not merely to give us the money that would seem to be needful to carry us through the world ; but to give us the fine gold of heaven to enrich us, to give us his own spotless garments to cover and adorn us.

And observe, the Apostle does not say that Christ came merely to save or redeem us, but he says he became poor to *enrich* us ; in other words, to make us partakers of his own blessedness. Look, for a moment, at the state of the rich man in hell. What has that proud worldling now that he can call his own ? What is there within that man's reach that he can grasp and make his own ? He cries for a drop of water, but he cries and laments in vain. Such is a picture of the utter poverty of fallen man. Look now at the beggar, Lazarus, carried to heaven on the wings of angels, placed in the bosom of Abraham, the friend of God, surrounded with all the glory and blessedness of heaven, of God himself. Such is the condition to which Christ is both able and willing to raise us.

When he visited our world, it was not merely that he might pluck us as brands from the burning : no, this was only the first step in the design he had in view ; his ultimate object was to make us like himself, to make us the children of God, and exalt us to heaven at last. Before he became poor we were debtors : we had nothing to pay : now, if we are his people, all things are ours. The

world, we are told, is ours ; eternity is ours ; life and death are ours ; things present and things to come, all in earth and heaven that our desires can grasp, or our natures receive—all, all are ours. We were poor as poor could be ; we are now in Christ rich as creatures of God can be.

Notice THE CLOSE CONNEXION WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE POVERTY OF CHRIST AND THE RICHES OF HIS PEOPLE—the direct influence that the one is said to have had and to have on the other. “For our sakes,” says the text, “he became poor, that”—what ? That he might pass through a state of earthly poverty to a state of authority and power, and exercise this authority and power in raising up and enriching us ? We might say yes, for so it really was ; but the Apostle does not say so : he says not one word here about the Redeemer’s lofty exaltation and greatness ; he ascribes our blessedness solely to his abasement, and in such a way as though he were determined we should not misunderstand him or overlook his meaning. He “became poor” for us, he says, “that we through his poverty might be rich.”

How strong, we may say, is this language, and yet how true ! We understand it, therefore, that Christ became man not only for our sakes, but as our representative. In this character he fulfilled that law which we had broken, and so magnified it, put so much honour on its character and authority by the penalty he paid to it on the cross, that the way is now open for the free and honourable exercise of Jehovah’s mercy, his mercy to the most guilty of Adam’s race. He is pleased to regard the degradation and the death of Christ, as an atonement and expiation for our sins ; and the obedience and righteousness of Christ, he regards as though it were our obedience and our righteousness ; he imputes it to us ; and having done this, he deals with us as righteous in consequence of it.

Interpret these words in any sense that comes materially short of this, and what can we make of them ? The Redeemer’s poverty enriches us : “Yes,” says Paul, “it does ;” he says this here ; again and again elsewhere he says the same : “Yes,” says the whole Church below ; and “Yes,” answers the triumphant Church above. “Through his poverty we are rich.” All ascribe the salvation and the glory they enjoy to the manger and the cross. And except we thus regard this manger and this cross, can we speak thus, and regard these things as a satisfaction and expiation for sin ?

Now, if any of you cavil at this statement—if your judgment or feelings revolt at it, be assured that you have yet to learn the very first rudiments of Christ’s Gospel ; you are in a state of complete darkness as to the real character and design of Christianity : whoever may know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, *you* clearly are utterly ignorant of it. The crucified Redeemer—I mean the Redeemer crucified, not for our example, or in testimony of his own pretensions, but crucified mainly for our sins, as a sacrifice, an atonement, an expiation—this is the one great feature, the one grand peculiarity of the Gospel of Christ ; and never will you rejoice in the Gospel, nor heartily love or prize it, and never come much under its cheering and purifying influence, nor be enriched by it on earth, or carried by it to heaven, till you view the Gospel in this light ; till the poverty of Christ has become the foundation of your best hopes, of all your hopes ; till his cross gets so interwoven with all your views of God, and your feelings towards him become so mixed up with every secret

emotion of your soul, that you now sum up all the religion you possess, in calling it "glorying in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ," of love to that cross, and a heartfelt experience of its power.

In conclusion, let me implore every one of you to ask yourselves what you know of the grace you have now heard of? You observe the Apostle speaks of the *knowledge* of him: "*Ye know* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." And by this he means something more than the knowledge we may have of a mere fact of science: he has in view such a knowledge of it as we style experimental; that is, following out the experience of knowledge; the same kind of knowledge as the once diseased man has of the remedy that saved him; or the once perishing beggar has of the royal gift that enriched him; or as you and I have of the sun's light and heat. Be assured there is such a knowledge of the Gospel as this; and be assured, also, it is the only knowledge of the Gospel that is worth possessing; no other knowledge will bear you up at last. You may know much about the Gospel; but if you only know it as a man of science may know the properties of food—if you never bring the Gospel home to your own souls, it will no more save your souls, than understanding the properties of food will, without taking that food, strengthen the body.

Ask yourselves, then, each one for himself, Do I know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ? It was once a mere matter of hearsay to me—a matter of speculation and inquiry: is it now a matter of experience? Do I know it in my inmost soul? Is it now affecting my heart, producing in my feelings and in my affections such results as were never produced before? What, for instance, do I think of my own spiritual condition? Am I conscious of that utter poverty in myself of which I have heard this morning; to which this text alludes? Do I feel that when ministers speak of spiritual poverty, they cannot speak of it in stronger terms than I feel it? And what do I think of the poverty, humiliation, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ? Am I resting on him to enrich me? Am I building on him all my hopes of happiness and salvation? Is he actually enriching me? Do I feel he has put me in possession of that which is more valuable to me than all possessions besides? Has he given me that which I rejoice in more than I rejoice in anything or everything else? Could I be content with him though all else that is dear to me were gone? Do I feel that the Gospel has put something in my heart, which, though I had nothing else, would still leave me rich—would still cause me to deem myself a happy man?

Then bless God, brethren, for his goodness towards you. Love the Lord Jesus Christ, not only for the grace he displayed in his deep voluntary poverty, but for the further grace he has manifested by conveying the knowledge of it into your souls. Strive to become more acquainted with it—to feel, and exemplify, and embody, by a holier life, more of its influence. There can be no surer sign of our having been enriched by Christ than a desire to be more enriched; no surer test of knowing him aright, than hungering and thirsting to know him more.

And let this text, brethren, stir you up to a right view of your situation as Christians. It is not merely salvation that Christ has made yours—mere deliverance; but wealth above, wealth of the highest kind—spiritual wealth and riches: such things as are deemed valuable, not in this poor world, but in the

glorious heaven, and even now causes angels and archangels—yea, God himself, to deem you rich in Christ; rich on earth—yea, complete in him; having *in hand* enough to excite your wonder and thankfulness, and in *prospect* what this Apostle calls in another place “all the fulness of God.”

Oh, brethren, we seem almost as ignorant of our privileges *in* Christ, as we were once of our danger and misery *out* of him. To look for one day, for one hour, into our hearts, notwithstanding their torpor and coldness, the wretched sinkings, the low paltry cares—who could believe that you and I are *rich in Christ Jesus*? Who could believe that you and I thought ourselves rich men? The poor starving miser thinks of his gold when anything troubles him, and the thought comforts him. But where is the comfort that we sometimes get amidst worldly losses and bereavements from the thoughts of our treasure? There are moments when we scarcely think of it at all. Oh, if there be any creatures in the world who need to walk humbly, we are them. Let us humble ourselves before him, if for nothing else, yet for this—that we think so little of the unsearchable riches of Christ.



## PERSEVERANCE IN WELL DOING.

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PERCY CHAPEL, CHARLOTTE STREET, FITZROY SQUARE, AUGUST 24, 1824.

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“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”  
GALATIANS, vi. 9.

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I AM now about, brethren, to consider the language already read, in connexion with the object which is more especially to be brought before your notice this evening. And, may he who speaks, and you who hear, be enabled rightly to understand their meaning. Without the Spirit's work, who among us can know the things of God; who among us can rightly understand that word, which, while it is the word of God, and maketh wise unto salvation in the hearts of them that believe, is also, in too many cases, speaking after the manner of men, only a savour of death unto death; because men, through the perverseness of their hearts, and through the unbelief that remains in them, will not look in simplicity to the will of God.

My friends, let but your eye be single, and straightway your whole body shall be full of light. Ask that God may open to you his mind and his will, and not keep from you any of those mysteries which it is expedient for you to know, whereby your present peace may be secured, and a well-grounded hope obtained of your being with Christ when he appeareth, that you may behold his glory. Ask the Father of lights, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and you shall receive; for every one that rightly asketh receiveth; every one that asketh with a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, shall receive: and to him that cometh with a firm determination that he will not go away without the blessing, even as Jacob did of old time, when he wrestled with the Incarnate God until the break of day, and said, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me;” knocking at the gate of heaven it shall be opened; the gate of everlasting life shall be indeed opened, and the sinner shall have the full blaze of God's glory shining in upon his soul, chasing the shades of darkness, and error, and death away, and giving him a hope full of immortality, and a joy unspeakable; already a foretaste of that bliss which remaineth for the children of God. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

I will call your attention, in the first place, to THE SPEAKER, or rather THE WRITER. The language was written, as we find, under inspiration, by Paul to the church at Galatia. The commencement of the Epistle runs thus: “Paul,

\* On behalf of the Percy Chapel Schools.

an Apostle (not of men"—not receiving his commission from man—"neither by man"—not by man's will; not to be prepared by seminaries for the purpose—"but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia, grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

The writer is Paul; his history, doubtless, is matter with which most of you are well acquainted; and of which, without doubt, none of you ought to be ignorant. You are aware that he was a proud Pharisee; that he had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; instructed in the perfect law, according to the traditions of the fathers; for which he became so exceedingly zealous, that he persecuted every way unto the death, but more especially the way and doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth, because it comported not with his own idea of that which was right in the sight of God, and because he thought that in thus acting he was doing God service. But "it pleased God," as he himself states in the commencement of this Epistle, "to reveal his Son in him;" not to him: that is, not by outward manifestation, not by any thing which man's fleshly wisdom and might revealeth; it pleased God to reveal Christ in him; that is, to form Christ in him as the principle of the new life, so that he could cry out, as we find him doing, at the close of the second chapter of this Epistle, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live"—there was the revelation of Jesus in him—"yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Paul, then, aforetime the proud persecuting Pharisee, had been changed into Paul the humble, the simple-minded, the single-eyed follower of that very Jesus of Nazareth, whose name he once trod under foot, and whose disciples he once persecuted unto death. This Paul was such a character as he describes himself, in the third chapter of the Epistle that he addressed to the church of Philippi, the things that were gain to him he counted loss for Christ; "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The righteousness, which, as he himself expresses, writing by the Spirit in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is "unto all, and upon all them that believe."

Such was the person. It appears from the history which we have of this Apostle, as it is derived from the book of the Acts, written probably by the evangelist Luke, as also derived from his own records contained in the apostolic epistles—this Apostle after he had known the Holy One and the Just One, after he had been for a witness of that power of Christ which every individual must experience, or he knoweth nothing of Christ—Paul, after he had become thus changed, after in him old things had passed away, and all things become new, was a man called unto trials and difficulties, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfil it. Straightway hunger was nothing to him; thirst was nothing to him; privations of body were nothing to him; privations of mind were nothing to him: stripes, imprisonments, fastings, labours, troubles, watchings, perils by land and perils by sea; dangers from his own countrymen, from the heathen,

all things were nothing: for he had found, that having Christ he could be bold to meet (what shall I say?) not the world only, but the devils also. Yes, having found Christ, he was ready to stand and defy all created things; for he could say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" You are aware, that while he was promulgating that truth, which he found to be so precious to him, the labours he was called to endure were not a few, and the perils—even going to the very extremity almost of life—were not few either; for he was cast out and left for dead, and that not once only, but several times; he was persecuted from city to city; he was, like his Master, obliged to wander about houseless, destitute, afflicted, tormented; for the world was not worthy of him, even as it was not worthy of his great Lord, his great Redeemer. Such is the man, who says to the Church, writing not his own words, but words which were given to him authoritatively, by that Spirit which will not suffer one jot or tittle of his record to pass away until it had received its full, its complete accomplishment; this same Paul writes "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

It is very important when we hear an exhortation, or when we read an exhortation, to consider the character of the person who gives it. And here we shall see its importance, if we just consider *what was the issue of the Apostle's labours*. These labours which have been already referred to, as being so abundant, and of such a character, as one might say, they have not been equalled either before or since, except by Him who endured all contradiction of sinners against himself, and was content to be as nothing, that he might redeem us to God by his blood.

If you ask, in the first place, *what was the issue of the Apostle's labours concerning the Gentiles*; you have only to consult the record which you have in the Scriptures, and you shall find, that there was nothing that could give flattery to the flesh; there was nothing that could cause the man to be overjoyed as to the work of his own hand. Take as a specimen the church of Corinth; the church which he had watered with his tears, and built with his prayers, and over which he had yearned with much fatherly anxiety and solicitude; the church of which he had written on one occasion, that they "came behind in no gifts," waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and yet what was the state of that church? Was there anything unclean there? Was there anything unholy there? Was there anything to constrain this loving Apostle, in whom dwelt richly the spirit of his Master, to say, "Take heed, lest when I come unto you I come with the rod of chastisement; lest I be found unto you such as ye would not; because I find among you debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." You know the state of the church of Corinth; you know the sharp rebuke which he was obliged to use to those sinners of the Gentiles, concerning whom he had said, and the desire of his soul evidently went out with the words, "I seek not yours, but you:" he was constrained to use such language concerning one of those churches on one occasion when he testified of their unrighteous practices: it was a most sharp and a most cutting accusation, and it was the accusation of a man who knew not how to accuse wrongfully, but who did know how to deliver over men to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. This was the issue; the issue of his labours in most respects with reference to the Gentiles: his work appeared to demand

humiliation ; no glory could he find ; he could not say, "This is what I have builded with my own hand ; this I have procured by my might, or my power, or my influence ;" oh, no, what he had to do was to humble himself, as he declared he did, in the presence of the Lord, and pour forth his soul for those who had so grievously offended against the light and knowledge which had been given unto them.

And, then, if you turn your eyes to *the Jews* ; to those brethren according to the flesh, for whom he was content to endure all things if he might but win them unto Christ Jesus ; for whom he says he had continual sorrow and heaviness of heart, and for whom his most constant prayer and earnest desire was, that they might be saved ; what was the issue of his labours concerning them ? The preaching of the cross, even by the mouth of the Apostle Paul, who did mighty deeds, who did signs and wonders—did this preaching of the cross prove to them anything but foolishness ? Did it prove to them anything else but that stumbling-block, which it was declared it should, by the mouth of God's servant, the prophet Isaiah ? No, verily ; the Jews remained stubborn, and cast out the name of Christ as evil ; and the Apostle, up to the time of his death, was as much, if not more, the object of bitter and heavier persecutions on the part of his own nation, than he was even on the part of heathen and infidel Rome. And such was the man who could write, "And let us not be weary in well doing : for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."

As to THE "WELL DOINGS" of the Apostle, scarcely any doubt can be left on the mind with reference to these, if we attentively peruse the records of his commission. His well doings were not to make himself a name or a praise in the earth ; he was no mountebank, who for a season sought to attract the gaze and admiration of men, in order that upon the pinnacle they should raise for him he might stand and enjoy his transient life of honour and worldly reputation. No ; his desire was to do that which Christ did ; he desired so to follow Christ as he himself exhorts others to follow Christ. His desire was to shew all patience of evil, all endurance of suffering, all readiness to every good work, all uncompromising and unflinching integrity in his declaration of that truth which was to be the line of demarcation between the precious and the vile, to separate between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. His well doing was this : to account no trouble too great for the honour of his Master ; to account no suffering too much, that he might win souls to Christ ; to account no agony beyond endurance, provided he could preach that name which is above every name, and than which none other is given under heaven whereby we must be saved ; for it is the name of Jehovah-Jesus, the God-man, the Mediator between God and man, who shall lay his hand both upon Jehovah and us, saying to his Father, "I have found a ransom ; deliver, therefore the captive from going down to the pit ;" and saying also to us, "Turn ye unto your God ; for I can reconcile you ; I can take away your enmity, through mine own blood-offering ; it is I that have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins." This was Paul's "well doing." It was on the one hand so to love the sinner, as at the same time, that he did most cordially hate the sin ; and on the other it was to endure all hardship, as a good soldier of God, and a servant of Christ, that he might



present the Church unto God as a chaste virgin, undefiled, and entirely without spot ; free from the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Now, in the next place, let us pass to consider, WHAT THE APOSTLE MEANS BY HIS EXPRESSION, "DUE SEASON." It is very evident the Apostle referred, not first, to his labours. Of course, when I make this declaration, I make it in its general sense. A few exceptions do not invalidate the general truth. It is true that there were individuals in Corinth, who were separate from the mass of corruption that ultimately prevailed in that Church ; it is true that there were individuals at Ephesus, who were not of that class which made it necessary that Christ should rebuke with sharpness the angel of that Church, because the Church had left its first love, and forgotten the simplicity of faith in Christ Jesus. But still, in the general, the Gentiles were much in the state in which they were before the proclamation of the Gospel was made to them ; they cast out the name of Christ as evil. And the Jews also stumbled at that stumbling-stone and rock of offence ; even the precious Corner Stone that was laid in Zion ; the Elect of God ; the man that was Jehovah's fellow ; the Lord our Righteousness.

Seeing, then, that the Apostle did not receive all he expected to receive, and seeing nevertheless that he has left upon record these words, for our admonition and use, we must endeavour to ascertain what meaning can be attributed to the language, "due season." His observation is such as precludes all doubt as to the issue ; he rested in his own mind, on the ultimate certainty of the issue. But the Apostle doubtless understood that while the end is the first in God's purpose, it is the last in manifestation. I say, while the end is the first thing in God's purpose, it is the last thing in manifestation. The Apostle Paul doubtless understood, that all things at last were to be gathered up in Christ ; as he says in the beautiful commencement of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, that God hath determined "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to gather together in one all things"—in that one whom he calls the Beloved ; in whom also we are accepted. The Apostle knew that it was God's purpose to *head up*, as it were—for that is the meaning of the original expression in that passage—to "head up" in Christ ; making Christ the head, and his own Church the body ; making Christ the corner stone, the stone which shall be brought with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it ;" even as he is laid the foundation stone of the Church in Zion. The Apostle understood this ; and having a largeness of spiritual apprehension, and having a distinction of comprehension, he could see that his own season was not perhaps God's season ; that the season which the flesh might dictate as the best for success, was the time and season which God might shew was the least correct time for the manifestation. He knew that a time of suffering must elapse, as well for ministers as for people, before they, who through that should enter into the joy which is prepared for those that love God ; and he knew that as Christ had, before his glory, passed through humiliation, so ministers, as well as people must likewise pass through humiliation ; and they must be content to have death inscribed upon every hope, before they should see those hopes revive, even as Abraham's son revived, and he received him back again from the dead. He knew this, and therefore he was quite willing to see death written

even upon his ministrations ; he was quite willing to see death written upon all his hopes, for he knew there was a bright resurrection for all the hopes he had in Christ Jesus ; he knew that the fulness of the Gentiles should ultimately come in ; that all Israel should come in ; and that the Lord will turn ungodliness from Jacob. And therefore he was content to say, " And let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

The expression " due season," then, I conceive refers to a time which is known only to the Father, who hath put the times and seasons in his own power. The expression " due," is a word which is elsewhere translated " own." It is a pronominal adjective, which signifies possession ; which signifies a peculiar appropriateness when it is joined with any particular substantive. To give you an instance of the use which is always made of it, I may mention the place where we are told that the Jews found fault with Christ because he made himself equal with God, saying that God was his Father : " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The expression there is the same that is found here ; his *own* Father ; God was his *own* Father. So in his " own season"—that is, the season which is peculiarly adapted for the purpose ; the season which God knows to be the most appropriate ; the season that shall best fit in to all the other declarations which God shall make of his majesty, his justice, and his power, as well as his love, his mercy, and his grace : at that time " we shall reap, if we faint not." That season may not be ours, as, doubtless, many times it is not : that season may not be ours, not the one which we, in our fleshly wisdom, should choose ; but it is the season which God chooses, the season which is best adapted, which is most peculiarly suited for the purpose of mercy and truth meeting together, and righteousness and peace kissing each other.

Paul was thus content to look forward to the time when he should reap the reward of his labours ; he was content to look forward to the time when the full accomplishment should be manifested of that petition which Christ himself has provided us ; " Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." He was content, like the husbandman, to plough up the fallow ground ; he was content to sow the seed ; he was content to cast the harrow over the earth ; he was content patiently to endure when he saw the snow upon the ground, as it were, killing the hopes which he had entertained ; and all this because he knew, that in his own season, in the season most peculiarly appropriate to the purpose, God would give him to reap if he fainted not. The husbandman was first to endure toil, that afterwards he might receive the joy of the harvest.

Now, Christian friends, what a lesson of exhortation do we derive from such a passage of Scripture as this. Perhaps few of us would have so high an estimation of himself as to put himself in comparison with the Apostle Paul : but supposing that none should—supposing that none would be willing to put himself side by side with this great Apostle of the Gentiles ; can we say other than the Apostle ; can we say anything but this—" And let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not?"

To as many as have known the Spirit, the language of my text will come with great weight, even if it be viewed only as the exhortation of Paul the uninspired : supposing it to be only the language of man. But when we take a

higher standing, as we must, and view this language as coming to us, not with Paul's authority, but with the authority of Him who made Paul his Apostle; who was Paul's hope, Paul's joy, and Paul's abiding peace and solace, and never-failing strength; when we view it as the language, not of man, but of the Living God, is there in it, nay, can there be in it, any greater authority than that which it already has? It is not the language, then, of Paul the fallible, but of Paul the infallible; of Paul, viewed not merely as an earthen vessel, brittle, worthless, frail, corruptible; but it is the language of Paul viewed as the golden vessel of sanctification, into which the Spirit of God was being poured abundantly, that out of that vessel again, large supplies might be given for the Church's need.

Such is the language; take it and apply it to every purpose of life; and you shall find it come with power to your souls. Do any of you feel that the Christian course is one of great difficulty? Remember what Paul says. Do any of you feel tired from the conflict with the foes within, or from the foes without? Remember what Paul says. Are the men about you such as have no sympathy with you? He had his thorn in the flesh, as well as you; he had his messenger of Satan to buffet him, as well as you: he knew what it was to have fightings without, and what was far more fearful, fightings within: he knew what it was to be perplexed beyond measure; he knew what it was to be persecuted, to be cast down, to have all things taken away; to be denuded of every hope, to stand naked in the presence of the Living God, having nothing in the creature, nothing in self, but only saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb; and naked must I return;" finding strength only in the Lord, and sufficiency to enable us to say with him, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

And yet I say, "Be not weary in well doing," whether you have to maintain a good confession as individuals in Christ's Church, or whether as beacons to others, you are to come forth more prominently. The language will suit you: as private individuals you shall have consolation from this language; as public characters you shall have consolation from it, and be enabled to make a good confession. If you are in difficulty, also, it will afford you rich consolation. It was given for you, believers; "Whatsoever things are written, are written for you, that you through patience and suffering might have hope," a hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you.

And now to apply these words to that purpose for which it is my privilege to call your attention this evening. How applicable is such language as this, to all efforts which may be made from time to time, to declare the Gospel of good tidings in the ears of men. How comforting, in the first place, to you, who in the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, seek to do your Master's will. My dear friends who are teachers in those schools whose cause I now advocate, I would say to you, that while God's ministering servants, who are commissioned to be ministers for Christ in the sanctuary, derive comfort and strength from such language as this, you may also derive strength from the same language. It is not written merely for us who minister in holy things; it is written also for your consolation and joy in Christ, who are ready to give up your own personal ease, and your own personal comfort, that you may serve



God in your day and generation. Remember that you must be found well doing. Not well doing after man's estimation; not serving the flesh; not pharisaically or hypocritically keeping to your own plans, and neglecting to seek that "wisdom from above which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." "Be not weary in well doing," after the example of Christ, your great pattern, and after the example of Paul his servant: being *thus* not weary in well doing, you may draw comfort from these words.

And what shall I say to you who are members of the congregation, in urging you to give your assistance to these schools; to give your increased support, and your prayers with your support? You are not to look for the fruit of your labour now; you are not to look for all things according to your own mind and will. You remember, there was one, who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich:" and yet, though this one was God's co-equal and co-eternal Son, we have scarcely any record, or the record, if we possess it at all, is but, at the best, very scanty, as to the fruits of his personal ministrations: while we read of three thousand in one day coming into the pale of the visible Church, through the ministrations of the Apostles; those who were the weak, the poor, the foolish, the unwise fishermen of Galilee. While we read such things as this of the Apostles, do we read the like as having been the fruits of the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth? No. And is not this a lesson for us? If the great Author and Finisher of our faith was content to do his Father's will, irrespective of the fruits, irrespective of what he could then see—if God's own dear Son was content in humility, quietly to work in the night of weariness, as well as in the sunshine of noontide, shall not we be content to do the like? Where is our faith, where is our patience, where our long-suffering? If we will only work up to the point at which we can see the fruit of our working, our work is nothing worth; our work shall be cast out as something vile, in that day when Jesus shall appear, and give to every man according to his works. We must work from love; from a desire to do good; and we must say, "Ours is the duty; the event is God's." It is ours to use every means; it is ours to cast up the way, and then, it is God's to use what instruments he pleases for gathering in his people. He is to take the stones out of the quarry by what machinery he best may choose. And thus the spiritual edifice shall be completed; thus the whole work of grace shall be completed, and a habitation prepared for God by his Spirit.

But while I would say these things, (and I feel that we need continually to be reminded what is the true method of all working; what is the true method of all godly labour;) there are instances which come to our knowledge, of the way in which God is pleased, from time to time, to shew us, that he *is* at work: that he, by his Spirit subdues, while we by his Spirit do preach; that the arrow of conviction is lodged by his own hand in the heart, while we are drawing the bow, as it were, at a venture. I mentioned one instance this morning, in connexion with these very schools, in which God was pleased to shew, that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, he was able to perfect praise. I will now read to you a short extract from the history of one, whom I knew in body, who has passed to her rest, before she had attained to the age of that child to whom I was referring this morning. It is an instance which shews that even now we



may at times reap ; we may at times see the corn ripen so fast, that when we are talking of the blade just springing up, the Lord is working with such mighty power, with such wondrous efficacy, the power of righteousness does so cause the increase to come forth, that before we can scarcely pronounce the word, the blade of corn is ripened and cut down by the sickle of God, to be gathered into the garner of God.

The instance to which I refer, occurred in a poor but godly family, where the desire the parents had most at heart, was to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This child, about this time two years, took the illness which was, commonly speaking, the cause of her death. She fell asleep in Jesus about the December of that year: This child had had from the commencement of her illness a great fear and dread of death, so much so, that on one occasion, when she found her strength just failing, her flesh so struggled and gained the mastery, that she cried out, "I cannot, I must not, I will not die." Her words, though meant carnally, were by the Spirit afterwards, verified spiritually; for she could not, she must not, she was not to die that death, which is the separation, not merely of the body, but of the soul also, from the enjoyment of Him with whom all our blessedness and all our joy is eternally connected. But afterwards it pleased God to take away her hearing, and she became deaf; this was in order to shew how God can work irrespective of human means. It is true that the child had been taught, as far as human teaching could convey the knowledge of divine things, the truth as it is in Jesus: but now that the work of conversion was fully and finally to be accomplished, the Lord would shew us, that after all means are used, it is himself that must crown the work; it is he who must give the blessing; for without that blessing nothing can be done. During this season, she found a Psalter, which had been given to her by a member of her family, a precious treasure to her in the night; as she was lying racked with pain of body, her mind could rejoice in such declarations as those wherewith the Psalmist expressed his faith when he said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his own name's sake." She expressed most beautifully her notion of prayer: she declared that it was great comfort to her, when she could *get at it*: "Oh, what a kind Father, my heavenly Father is." And again she said, "I do not know how to leave off prayer when once I get at prayer; but I cannot always get at it." "Was not this," observes the writer, "was not this the Spirit teaching her the difference between her prayers and his? She could pray, but she could not *always* pray; she had to *get at* prayer." Towards the time of her death her joy became complete, and even the last words she was heard to utter, were, "Jesus," and "Pray for me." Her parents, and those members of her family that survived, and there were only two of them, could not find the chamber the chamber of mourning, but it was the chamber of joy where this infant died, for she was not much more than nine years of age. When the body of this infant was committed to the grave, they felt convinced they committed that body, "in sure, and certain hope of the resurrection, unto eternal life, through the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

Scarcely one month has elapsed since it was my privilege, in that house, to enter into what the world calls the chamber of mourning. The only surviving sister of this child lies now fast hastening to the tomb. But when I entered her chamber, her eyes beamed forth with that joy which is full of immortality; and when I spoke to her of the death of her sister, the tears streamed down her cheeks; but they were not tears which indicated any fears of death; the fear of death had passed away. The brightness which illumined her countenance, when I spoke to her of the glories of the celestial inheritance, I shall never forget. The flesh was at work, it is true; but there was that rich and abiding consolation which the Lord had been pleased to give amidst it all. Oh, children, children, what a scene is this; suppose you were thus placed: but if the Lord was pleased to make the faith of any one of you such as that which I have described of this child, oh you would wonder you had so long neglected the things which belong to your everlasting peace; you would say, "How could I be so foolish as to seek that which could not profit, to seek that bread which perisheth, instead of that which endureth?" You would see, that the only thing worth living for is, the knowledge and enjoyment of your God.

Now let me say one word to the parents who may be present this evening; the parents of the children whose cause is now advocated. Oh, how can I speak with sufficient energy to you? Thousands of parents, in this day of trouble and rebuke, and blasphemy, are doing all that in them lies to make their children the fit and most ready instruments of the devil's work, that afterwards they may be vessels most fit and most complete for the endurance of that wrath that can never terminate. Yes, there are parents, who by their lying, their stealing, their lusts, open and abounding in the sight of men; there are parents, who by their unguarded, unbridled, licentious blasphemies, do give such an example to their children, as that they cast off all fear of God, and run in the way of wickedness, and though young in years become old in crime. Is there any such parent in this congregation this evening? Are there any parents of children who are blasphemers; who tread the Lord's name under foot, and the Lord's ordinances; despising his sanctuary, setting at nought the messages of his grace, casting away all the blessings that are given to them, to impart to them consolation and joy, and ultimately their salvation, if they receive them in faith: are there any such here, I say? Consider what you are doing: you are sowing; but what a harvest will you reap, when the Lord of the Harvest shall come to gather together the whole world; when all the children of the wicked shall be gathered together, a mighty concourse, and there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth? Are you content to sow to the flesh? To the flesh, then, you shall reap corruption: you shall find that worm which dieth not; and that fire which is not quenched shall become your everlasting portion. One great source of your misery, and a source which shall never fail, will be the consideration of the many means of salvation which you have neglected; of the many opportunities which have been offered to you, but have only been despised. You shall say, "How foolish was I that when I heard reproof I heeded it not; for now the Lord mocketh at me, and the Holy One of Israel, whose bowels of compassion were so marvellous, and so great, laugheth when I call upon him." Oh, think of that day, when many voices shall be heard to cry out—and it shall be the greatest discord which creation ever heard from

the very time when all things went to rack and ruin at the first Adam's fall—oh, I say, think of that day when there shall be such sounds falling upon the ear of miserable man as they never heard before, sounds that are given to us in the word of God as the terrors of the Lord, by which his servants would persuade men, if haply they might move them to turn to the Lord, and seek him, though he be not far from them. And what sounds are these? “Rocks fall on us; mountains cover us; for the great day of the wrath of the Lamb is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Oh, what a reaping will there be then! Some who have sown the wind shall reap the whirlwind; some who have been blowing bubbles for their own wretched gratification, shall then find the tornado of God's wrath hurling them hither and thither, monuments of his justice, and of his eternal vengeance. Those who have esteemed themselves happy shall find themselves miserable; those who esteemed themselves rich shall find themselves for ever poor. Then they who have blasphemed the name of Christ shall find that name to be only a source of terror and agony, because it was not, while it might have been, made to them the source of joy and of unfeigned pleasure.

Oh, what shall we say of these things? Will you not be warned? I have spoken now the words which are the words of God. I have not uttered one argument but what is fully and completely borne out, yea, more than borne out, by the whole tenor of that Word which is my life, my joy, my all. Oh, see that you despise not this testimony; for if they escape not who neglected the words spoken by the mouth of Moses, the giver of the Law, how shall they escape who neglect so great a salvation? How shall they be able to escape who refuse him that speaketh from heaven, who by the mouth of his messenger now says, “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

May the Lord bless his own word; may he bless it to the congregation at large; may he bless it to those individuals who labour as teachers for these schools; may he bless it to the children of these schools, who though young in years are not too young to know much of sin, and not too young to know much of Christ. May he bless it to the parents, who if they have no other warning than this, shall find this warning to be their condemnation in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, and all shall be judged according to that doctrine which it is my privilege to preach.

## THE FALL OF SOLOMON.

FOR many years Solomon reigned over Israel. The morning of his life was indeed a morning without clouds: the brightness of his course was indeed splendid and brilliant, exceeding all that had preceded him in the equity of his administration, and the excellency and consistency of his personal conduct. The meridian of his reign was no less memorable, for all that tended to promote admiration of the monarch, and to secure happiness among the people. But how dangerous is even prosperity of the most exalted kind, when men are left to themselves. How few indeed can be trusted. Who ought not to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me?" Towards the close of the life of Solomon, when there ought to have been the full maturity of an honourable old age consecrated to God, we find his heart was lifted up; and through the fascinating influence of sensuality and idolatry, he brought dishonour on his name, and distress on his country; and the thing which he did displeased the Lord. The mournful record is faithfully given to us in 1 Kings, xi. We are told of his licentious connexion with the women of the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Zidonians, and the Hittites; who tempted him to rival, in the establishment of his court, the luxury and splendour of Asiatic magnificence. By these evil associations idolatry was established. "It came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." Many, and painful indeed, were the circumstances in this case which gave it peculiar aggravation. He had been in early life dedicated to God. He had had signal proofs of the divine favour. He had been singularly prospered in his reign. He had been the means of extending national happiness on a wide scale. How, then, can we account for an apostacy like this? Our knowledge of the sad principles of human nature, and of the power of human depravity, can alone account for it. He could not stand the trial of the admiration of the singular degree of glory and honour with which he was surrounded. We find, therefore, that riches and influence and the high admiration he possessed, brought him into the most dangerous circumstances, exposed him to evil communications—these corrupted good manners: and when a man is left to himself—when a man is forgetful of his dependance, it matters not what may be his talents, or what may be his character. No standing in the Church, no usefulness in the world, no honour resulting from past achievements, can in itself furnish a single moment's security to any man from the power and assaults and fatal influence of temptation. Temptation presented to the young and inexperienced, we know is too often fatal, too often successful; but temptations to those who have been long established in the profession of religion, and surrounded by all that is calculated to preserve them, have often proved successful; to teach the established, as well as the commencing believer—the mature, as well as the infant, in the family—to teach all, the necessity of constant, habitual watchfulness, and humble dependance on the preserving grace of God.

REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D



## THE PRESENT BLESSEDNESS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF BELIEVERS.

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JOHN STREET CHAPEL, KING'S ROAD, AUGUST 31, 1834.

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“For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.”—PSALM, cxlix. 4, 5.

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WE know not what the occasion was which gave rise to this Psalm, neither is it to us of any moment. Whatever were the circumstances that led to its composition, nothing appears more manifest than that the Eternal Spirit raised the writer of it above the occasion, and filled his soul with the “joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.”

It is a Psalm of praise: he calls it “a new song.” “Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a *new* song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.” Then he gives us the reason: “For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.” And then, as if carried beyond the precincts of time, he addresses the saints in glory, calling upon them to be joyful; “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.” Praise is comely for the upright: he that offereth praise glorifieth God: and never is the soul more under the influence of the Spirit of grace, than when under the influence of the Spirit of praise. May the Holy Spirit direct our minds to some of the great, and blessed, and delightful truths, which open themselves to us in these two verses.

Observe, in the first place, the present blessedness of God's people: “The Lord taketh pleasure in his people.” Secondly, their future prospects: “He will beautify the meek with salvation.” Thirdly, the exhortation: “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.”

First, THE PRESENT BLESSEDNESS OF GOD'S SAINTS. These who are spoken of are God's people; they were chosen in him from eternity; they are redeemed by precious blood; they are called by special grace; they are made partakers of the Holy Ghost; and they are sanctified by that faith that is of divine operation. They have a high interest in God; for, blessed be his name, he giveth us courage to say, that such an interest have his people in him, that there is not one perfection of his nature in which he does not enable them, from time to time, to have communion with him. He has a deep interest in them, and in all that concerns them: his eye was fixed on them in eternity,

and all through the winding vale of time his eye watches over them for good : he brings them safe to glory at last, and there enables them to sing victory through the blood of the Lamb. *They love him*, though with but a poor and imperfect love, unworthy of themselves, and mingling itself continually with their own imperfections. But yet they love him sincerely ; their hearts are towards him ; he has drawn and overcome them by his grace ; so that they are enabled to love him and to say, " Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth whom I desire in comparison with thee." Still their love is like themselves—poor, imperfect, unworthy. But His love is like Himself—perfect, immutable, eternal. He loved them for nothing that he saw in them, but he loved them for his own Name's sake ; and though he sees in them continual cause wherefore he should love them no more, yet, seeing them in his Son, he rests in his love, he rejoices over them with singing, and loves them to the end. These are the Lord's people ; and he has never left himself without such : though the world knows them not, they are known to Him, and will be known to Him when time is no more.

The Lord *taketh pleasure* in them. He takes pleasure in their *persons* : he sees them as one with his own beloved Son. Oh to realize this truth through the stages of our eventful pilgrimage ! Oh, to enter into its sweetness at this moment ! Notwithstanding all that a pure and holy God, not only *may* see, but *must* see, in us, unworthy even of ourselves—much more of his infinite purity, yet there is not one moment of our existence, if we are his people, in which the Lord sees us not in his Beloved, viewing us as one with Him, and as accepted in Him. " The Lord taketh pleasure in his people : " not merely, as some will tell us, in their graces, but in their persons ; they are personally dear to him, and ever will be so.

The Lord taketh pleasure in their *graces*. All the workings of his own blessed Spirit in them—their repentance, poor as it is—their prayers, imperfect, as they are—every thought, every struggle with sin, every contest with the enemy, every real desire after heavenly progress—in the exhibition of each and of all these graces, God taketh pleasure in his people. You that are light in your own eyes, you that are poor in spirit, you that have been taught to think meanly of yourselves, (or, rather, let me say, to think *justly* of yourselves,) though you are ready to say, " The Lord hath forgotten me, and my God hath forsaken me," yet look up, ye heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, when you are told that there is not one going forth of desire after God, but the Lord taketh pleasure in it for his own Name's sake. Your attempts to glorify him, your desires to walk in his ways, your cup of cold water, your widow's mite, your inward struggles and your inward pangs—though the world knows them not, and though even the saints of God cannot discern them—it is your mercy to know (and let it be your mercy to-night, if it be the Lord's blessed will) that " the Lord taketh pleasure in his people." If you did but realize this truth in your hearts, that subtle delusion of Satan should be silenced in your spirit—" Do not these things lead from God ? " You should find that they lead to him : they draw the heart to him ; they humble the heart in abasement before him, and raise it up in holy affection. Often are you thought meanly of by the world ; often are you ready to confess yourselves less than the least of all saints, if a saint at all, and the chief of sinners. But though this be the work of the

Spirit bringing you downward, yet, be assured of this, "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people."

Secondly, regard **THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS**. "He will beautify the meek with salvation."

We have in the text a beautiful unfolding of that observation frequently made, that we see the characters of God's saints inclosed within their privileges: so that we cannot see the promise but we see the channel through which the Holy Ghost brings the enjoyment of that promise; we cannot see the mercy but we see the adaptation of the character in order to the enjoyment of that mercy. Who are they whom the Lord beautifies with salvation? The meek. And who are they? Those whom the Lord teaches to feel their own nothingness; those whom the Lord has disciplined in his own school and made poor in spirit. The world lays its stress on outward appearances (and too much of that passes current in the Church), but if you turn to the Sacred Volume and ask, "What is that great grace on which the Holy Spirit lays especial emphasis?" it is the grace of humility. With whom does the Lord begin in the fifth chapter of Matthew? "Blessed are the poor in spirit." To whom does the Lord look? To him "who is of a broken and contrite heart." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." And who is it makes them humble? God himself. Their hearts were as proud as pride itself. There is not a fancied excellency that we have or had which we made not our vantage ground, and sought to purchase heaven from the hand of God himself. However contemptible the acquirement (and there is not a saint of God who is not made to know this) there is not the least advance or advantage either in nature or in grace, with which Satan will not, from time to time, as he can prevail, cause our hearts to be puffed up; so that even the confession of our sins has a pride in it, and we cannot acknowledge the pride, but there is a pride in the confession of it. Who can make such poor, proud, wretched creatures meek in spirit, but God himself? Hence all the operations of the Spirit within a man: hence it is he brings, from time to time, a sentence of condemnation into his own soul: hence the more the believer knows of himself, the more does he feel his own nothingness: hence at the close of the day he sees spot, and defilement, and defect, and short coming in all that he does, and speaks, and designs, and thinks; hence, in his solemn approaches to God he has to confess, "The good I would do, that I do not; but the evil I would not, that I do:" hence, when he turns over the page of conscience, and thinks of God's tenderness, mercy, compassion, and love; God's goodness inevitably brings him to repentance; and the more that goodness is revealed to him, the lower ground he takes; and the more subdued he is in spirit, the nearer does he approach the likeness of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart."

How often, in tender mercy, God has told us, in answer to our prayers, "I love you too well to give you the desire of your hearts." We have been pressed, we have been oppressed, and often depressed; we have imagined both wind and tide running counter to our wishes; we have supplicated the Lord to take away the pressure; we have been earnest with him to remove that difficulty out of our way; but we have been taught that our Father loves us too well to take it away, and that it is, through the operation of the blessed Spirit, the

medium of discipline, by which our Father brings us down in the dust, that we may declare ourselves to be nothing, and Christ every thing. Who are they with whom we have most communion? Not those who are high talkers, but the meek: we may have more communion with some of God's people in a minute than with others in a year. Those whom the Spirit clothes with their own nothingness, bringing them down to the dust, and keeping them there—these are the ornaments of the Church, and of their profession; these are they with whom we have the sweetest communion, and the most blessed walking together towards our eternal home.

The meek are those whom God has rendered poor in spirit; they are those whom God has emptied; they are those whom he disciplines continually to come as poor as ever to the foot of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. How many a dear child of God is brought to learn this lesson: "The longer I live, the more I seem to want the blood and righteousness of the Son of God; for if there were but one thing required—if there were demanded of me but one holy thought, pure and spotless, and that was the hinge on which my salvation were to turn, I must be excluded from all blessedness and all hope." How many a lesson have you learned in the withering of your gourd, in the breaking of your cisterns! How often has God the Spirit been teaching you painful, but wholesome truths, in the valley of humiliation! How often, by reason of the creature's unkindness and your own emptiness, have you been taught to feel that you are nothing, and that Christ is every thing to you.

"He will beautify the meek with salvation." He prepares for them better things than they have in this world. Called by grace and believers in Jesus, though poor in themselves, the people of God are beautified even here. I thought, as we sung that hymn, describing the comeliness which the Lord puts on us, the perfect robe of righteousness, that covereth us from head to foot, that pure unsullied robe, every thread of which has the glory of Deity in it—I thought, as I seemed to join with you in our poor song, there was an infinity of beauty in that comeliness which the Lord puts on us even in this vale of tears. Keep fast hold of it; and pray that it may be wrapt about you by his blessed Spirit. For as the water in the brazen laver is one thing, and the application of it to our conscience is another thing—as pardon recorded in heaven is one thing, and the record on our conscience is another thing—so is the robe of righteousness; recorded in our judgments, we ourselves convinced that we must have an interest in it, is one thing; but to have it round about us, to enter into the glory of it—to remember that the angels of God, in all their glorious dress, are not so gorgeously arrayed as we are in the righteousness of God—this is another thing; and that other thing God alone can teach us.

The saints of God even in this world are beauteous. He says, "Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." And seen clothed, clothed in his righteousness, amidst all the changes of our changing selves, amidst all the defilements that still cling to us, yet this is our mercy, that, from the beginning of the year to the end of it, he that believeth is made the righteousness of God in him.

The people of God are beauteous by reason of the workmanship of God the Holy Ghost within them. The Psalmist says of the Church, she is "all glorious." And where is she glorious? She is "all glorious *within*." And the Apostle Paul,



writing to the Ephesians, says, "We are his workmanship;" or, as the original may be rendered, "We are his *poem*"—the work of his own hands, the fruit of his own wisdom, and the blessed effect of his own love.

It may, perhaps, be a matter of perplexity to some, how that can be said to be "all glorious within," when they see nothing but defect in it—when in their love there is defect, when in their humility there is defect, when in their zeal there is defect; when they see that in nothing are they what they ought to be, and in every thing what they ought not to be. The eye of the Omniscient can discern between that which is grace and that which is nature, though you cannot. Whatever there is of good in thee, is the effect of his workmanship; whatever there is of evil in you is the effect of your own flesh. You may reason from effect, and trace up the effect to its cause; but when you are to draw the line of distinction between nature and grace, in a moment you are foiled; you see difficulty where He sees none. He sees in a moment the work of his own blessed Spirit; that desire within you that would be holy as God is holy—that light of life within thee which all the death of flesh can never destroy—that inward breathing after God which is the fruit of divine operation; these are all beautiful things in God's sight. And when we look at the world, and see man dead in his sins, or the proud Pharisee full of himself—and when we look at the poorest, weakest, feeblest believer, we see as broad a distinction as between life and death; the highest wrought effect of the most sublime nature (if I may so speak) is as nothing. We may say of every natural man that his life is, in fact, one sin. What a solemn thought is that for careless sinners, if their hearts be but open to receive it! "What! has my life been one sin?" Yes. Dost thou ever pluck grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" First of all, make the tree good, and when the fruit shall be good: but if "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," how can its fruits be any otherwise than the parent stem by which it is produced? When we look at the weakest of God's people, and compare them with the strongest of natural men (if I may use the expression) we see as great a distinction as between life and death.

But the promise before us is that the Lord "will beautify the meek with salvation." Shall they be more righteous than they are? Never. Shall they be more pardoned than they are? Never. Shall they be more God's children than they are? Never. Shall God love them more than he does now? Wondrous grace! he cannot: his love is to them infinite, immutable, and eternal. In what, then, shall be their occasion of glory? They shall be beautified: all shall be in symmetry; no imperfection, no darkness—nothing to clog, nothing to impede: they shall be beautified with full salvation, in the enjoyment of eternal glory.

Thirdly, remark THE EXHORTATION. What! do believers want to be told to rejoice and glory? Do the saints of God want exhortation to be "joyful in glory?" No, beloved: it seems as if the Psalmist were taken into the very precincts of eternal bliss; as if his eye penetrated through the curtain, and looked within the world of futurity, and beholding the people of God there, called on them to shout for joy, now they are gathered to their homes, now they are transported beyond the waves, and the billows, and the storms, beyond

the deceiver's power, beyond the inward stain, beyond the fear of the world. "Oh, lift up your heads," (as if he had said) "and be joyful in glory."

Why should they rejoice? *Because they are without sin.* When we reflect that there is not one moment of the day in which we do not come short of the divine glory—that if we pray, or read, or meditate—whether we turn over the page of conscience, or are actively employed in that which the Lord would have us to do—this is our pang, that we still come short of the divine glory. But the prospect of being for ever freed from indwelling sin, the prospect of being delivered from indwelling corruption, presents the most tangible form of our future glory. And the saints are called upon to rejoice in it: "Be joyful in glory: ye are now safe home; you are now with Christ; you now see God; you are now with him for ever; you are beyond the region of tears—they no more trickle down your cheeks; you are beyond pain, beyond sin, beyond Satan—for ever with the Lord!" The prospect of eternal glory is, I believe, the most sanctifying contemplation that can engage the soul of man. I believe, that to a believer it is, without any exception, the most endearing, the most exhilarating, and the most blessed of all considerations.

It is a blessed thought that even in this vale of tears, the Lord takes pleasure in us—in you and in me. Have we not fled to Jesus for salvation? Have we not taken ourselves to his cross? Have we not had the sentence of death written upon ourselves? Have we not been disciplined into the confession, "Other refuge have I none?" Have we not stood where the poor publican stood? Have we not travelled where the poor prodigal travelled? Have we not been made willing to acknowledge, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt: but to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Is it so? Then God taketh pleasure in us at this moment: we have the mark of his seal, the sealing mark of being his people. Whatever other evidences there may be, faith is the great evidence; it is the great work of God the Spirit in our souls. Whatever may be accomplished, whatever in our hearts may be won over to God, be assured of this—the great step of all was, when we stepped out of ourselves and took up our hopes in the Lord Jesus Christ. The truth applied by the power of the Holy Ghost, pours balm on every wound; it will be a healing balsam in every disease, it will cheer us in every trial, and comfort our hearts in every despondency. Does the Lord take pleasure in me? Oh, to realize at this moment—"Thou God seest me in my sin; and thou beholdest me in Christ, and thou passest by my innumerable transgressions, and thou rememberest them no more: thou seest me in his righteousness, and thou hast given me a name better than that of son and of daughter: thou art well pleased with me for His sake; and thou dost rest in thy love over me, and rejoicest over me with singing." Is it so? Then behold the "strong consolation" that belongs to the child of God. Oh ye poor lovers of the world, ye poor lovers of pleasure, what an empty poverty would yours appear to you, if you could enter into this truth, when you kneel down by your bedsides: for you *may*, perhaps, have a form of prayer; you *may* bend the knee, and take the name of God on your lips—oh that you could for a moment realize the difference between that formal bend of the knee, and the inward consciousness that that God taketh pleasure in you in his Son! Then would you start up, like a man awakening from a dream,

and confess the emptiness of all created good, and Christ to be the fountain of real blessedness.

Let the subject prove a word of sweet encouragement to you, as ye pass through the vale of tears, ye saints of the Most High God. There are seasons when we feel like men forlorn—nothing can touch us: we feel that we mourn in our own circles. We may have had tender and sympathizing friends; but we are forced to tell them, that in the secret recesses of our hearts, there are a thousand springs that they cannot touch; that we are alone; that no one entereth into our orbit but the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. The world wears out: we find unkindness; we find ourselves mistaken, a little misunderstood, a little misinterpreted; we find others forming a false judgment of us; even our fellow Christians know us not; we find ourselves, in a sense, strangers in a strange land. And it may be, that with the outward current, God permitteth the inward current to run against us; we seem almost as if our shattered bark were left alone; faith seems to droop, corruption to be strong, the world a mighty foe, and Satan a cunning enemy. But oh, how pleasant when the Holy Ghost giveth us to know, that God takes pleasure in us. Though it be a hard fight, a difficult struggle, a continual wrestling; though it be a strait way, and we know it; though it be no little matter to walk with God, and we feel it; yet he takes pleasure in us; he stirs up our souls to seek after him; he encourages us to hope in his mercy; he keeps us still travelling on; he assists our weakness, and enables us to persevere in his way; cast down, yet not forsaken—persecuted, yet not slain; though often oppressed, yet still alive—though often wounded, yet still preserved in the midst of all our nothingness: the Lord still takes pleasure in us. What a reviving cordial is this consideration to the poor solitary, who thinks his or her case unknown, uncared for, unfelt, and unsympathized with! His pleasure can make up for the loss of all other things. But his frown!—think of it ye poor Christless sinners—his frown is hell; but his smile is heaven. Oh, to have him as a God that taketh pleasure in us, accepting us in his Son, and blessing his own work. This is the material of happiness. “He that commandeth me,” says the Apostle, “is the Lord.”

There are many things in this blessed prospect that ought to animate us. This may be the last sermon I may preach within these walls. Do you say this is an appeal to the feelings? I hope the spirit of darkness did not suggest that to your soul. I speak as a dying man, and I ask you as before God, What has been my preaching to you? Oh that there were a searching of heart to-night! Oh that there were an inward investigation in every one that hears me. What has the ministry been to my soul? Are you and I travelling on to God? Have you and I the inward witness that we are going to God? With what distinctness of vision can we look upon the glory to come, if the point remain still to be decided that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life? How many there are living at a perpetual uncertainty on a matter of all others, requiring the greatest certainty! Oh live not upon peradventures. Think of those, who, when the Lord their Master comes, open to him *immediately*: think of those who, when the bridegroom came, were found not sleeping, but watching: “Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.”

The saints in glory have their joy ; we have ours : and it would be well for us to enter more, while we are here, into the anticipation of the songs of eternal blessedness. To have much of God upon earth is the best recipe for a close walk with him ; the more our hearts are subdued by his love, the more we shall yield ourselves to him in our walk and conversation.

The saints are "joyful in glory;" "they sing on their beds." Are any of you on beds of affliction? You know not how soon you may be laid on the bed of death. We have had warning on warning : God is dealing with us as a congregation ; and it is a blessed thought that those who have been taken from among us are gone to heaven ; we have no doubt but that they are accepted in the Beloved—that they are now tasting the sweetness of those truths which they only sipped by the way, but found unutterably precious to their hearts. To live for God, to live for heaven, to live *close* with God on earth, to live in the anticipation of eternal blessedness—this is living ; thus we shall say, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain."

One favour, let me ask—and I ask it earnestly as before God—*Do you bear me upon your hearts ?* Do you find the word made a blessing? Does it ever come home with special application to your conscience? Does the Lord speak through me to your hearts? Does the Lord ever condescend to make use of my sling and my stone, and apply the word to your cases and circumstances? Give God the glory ; but let me have some of the blessing. Bear me in your hearts in prayer to God. Pray that the great truths which it is my desire to lay before you I may have the inward testimony and experience, and live habitually on them. May this be the case with us all ; so that if cholera come, or death in any other form, we may have nothing to do but to die.

May the God of heaven bless you and bless me with these upper-spring blessings ; and the praise, and the glory, and the honour, shall be his to all eternity.



## THE FREEDOM AND DIGNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

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REV. J. STRATTEN.

PADDINGTON CHAPEL, AUGUST 31, 1834.

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“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”—ROMANS, vi. 22.

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I THINK I may say that I have had sympathy with the Apostle Paul in the language he employs at the beginning of this epistle: “I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established, that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me:” that in the exercise of Christian graces, and the manifestation of holy and heavenly tempers and dispositions in the midst of one another, we may promote each other's faith, and hope, and peace, and purity, and joy. And I have no doubt but another part of this epistle has been exemplified by you: “I am sure,” says the Apostle, “that when I come to you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ: and I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” If we begin in prayer and in lowliness, we shall go on in comfort and in harmony, and terminate our course, whenever that may be, amid the light and brightness of the countenance of God, and in the immediate prospect of a glorious immortality.

And now to speak to you the same things, and to unfold in your presence and your hearing the same doctrines, which I have been used to do, to me, indeed, is not grievous, and for you it is safe: and the passage which I have presented to your notice this morning, contains a noble and striking view of the freedom and dignity of the Christian, emancipated from sin, brought out into the glorious liberty of the Gospel and of the children of God; we become servants to the Deity: our fruit—the effect and manifestation of our principles—is holiness. There is a beauty, and a splendour, the truest honour and joy, in holiness: and where holiness is the fruit, the end and the issue, in the order of means, as in the way of nature, is everlasting life.

The text is so simple, and so naturally and necessarily divides itself, that I have no more to do than to take the several clauses as they stand. First, we are “free from sin;” secondly, we are “servants to God;” thirdly, we bring forth holy fruit; lastly, heaven is in our eye.

First, WE ARE “FREE FROM SIN.” The expression here, of course, is not to be taken in its absolute and complete sense: it is not intended that we are,

at the present juncture, entirely, and really, and perfectly delivered from this moral contamination. But there are several very weighty, important senses, in which the expression is true, that we are free from sin, as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, first, *we are free from the guilt and the pollution of it.* You are aware that the view given of sin in Scripture is very striking and very awful. It is represented as an evil of gigantic and enormous magnitude. It is said to be a *plague*; and whenever sin is in a man's being, the plague spot is upon his nature; and he must either be healed, or he will come to fearful putrefaction, as it were, even whilst he is alive, and eternal perdition when (as it respects this world) he is no more. It is represented as a *leprosy*, foul, odious, detestable: where it prevails, and has the power in a man's being, he is said to be "full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." This is no exaggerated view of sin. If you and I could see sin in the light in which God views it—if our nature were brought up to the standard of divine purity, you would perceive, after all, that the expression conveyed but a very feeble and inadequate notion of the intrinsic evil, of the profound abomination of sin.

And now let me add, in the words of the prophet, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness:" and that day is come; that day is *this* day; this Scripture is *this morning* fulfilled in your ears: and I publish to you the word; I make known to you that the fountain is opened, and that let your pollution be what it may, and your stains and defilements as numerous and aggravated as they may, in this fountain you may wash and be clean.

The polluting nature of sin is distinctly recognised by David, when he says, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Isaiah speaks of sin, which is "crimson" and "scarlet;" as if there were the blood of murder upon the garment: but even that is to become purer than wool, whiter than snow. The same two-fold doctrine—I mean the enormity of sin on the one hand, and the complete manner in which it is abolished and done away on the other—is contained in that great Scripture, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin:" a sentence which, if I could, I would write in letters of light and fire upon the walls of this sanctuary, and upon the face of God's horizon; a sentence which, if I could, I would replicate from sea to sea, and from shore to shore. And in your hearing, in the name of God, I do declare, that when the efficacy of that blood is newly sprinkled upon the conscience, we are in the sense of the text, which is now before us, "free from sin;" the guilt and the pollution of it are no more.

Secondly, *we are free from the curse and the condemnation of sin.* "Know ye not, that so many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." That we have not so continued, are not so continuing, is our sin. The acts and instances of our disobedience are innumerable. The curse of heaven, the penalty of the law, and the malediction of God, come down where sin is. And that curse of heaven is not a shadow, not an illusion, not a phantom, not a dream; there is might in it, and there is energy, it works terrifically; and it will end (if it be not stopped, and neutral-

ized, and overborne) in a fatal ruination. When God curses he curses effectively. "Thorns and thistles," it was said, "shall it bring forth to thee:" the earth is accursed unto this day; the thorns and the thistles grow upon it now. 'To the serpent it was said, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat:" and it is so to this day: and Satan, of whom the serpent was the emblem and the figure, is reserved in chains unto darkness, and kept to the tremendous infliction and the awful retribution of the last day. And if the curse of heaven be upon my nature, or upon yours, following upon the heels of sin, it will not miss its object, it will not fail of its purpose; it will carry the man on, further and further from God, until he is in the depths of that abyss which has no bottom. There is a curse abiding upon every transgressor.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." As the curse is a reality, the redemption is a reality also: as the malediction comes down upon the offence, the entire removal of the offence, and of the curse, too, takes place, when the Lord Jesus intervenes. He has borne all believers in him; they never shall bear it; the curse is gone: "We are free from sin."

And I wish to bring into contrast with the statement that has been made, the beautiful language of Scripture: "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." "Therefore being justified" (not accursed) but "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" therefore is there now to us no condemnation, as "we believe in Christ, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." What shall we say to these things? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." "It is God," therefore, "that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" It is God that removes his own malediction, and pours down copious and abundant blessings in its place. It is God that imparts to us the gift of righteousness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And the words written in John, v. 24, are most true; "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." "Free from sin," the curse and the condemnation of it shall touch us no more.

Thirdly, *we are free from its tyranny, from its despotic power and usurpation.* This the Apostle teaches in the foregoing verses of this chapter: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." *Before* our conversion it did reign; it had the dominion; we were under the power of it; we did obey, not God, but sin. *Since* our conversion, since the grace of God has been mighty in us, and the energy of the Holy Spirit has been experienced, we have to say, in the language of the Apostle, "Sin shall not have"—and sin does not have—"the dominion over us; for we are not under the law, but under grace." Now take the law, read to any believing man the ten commandments; of which of them is he an habitual breaker? Which of them does he not unfeignedly and circumspectly desire and endeavour to keep? Take the spiritual exposition of the law given by our Lord, and the two great principles and commands of it, of which he has given us so exact and beautiful a compendium—the love of God, and the love of man; take any believer, and see, in proportion to the clearness, soundness, and strength of his believing, if there be not pure affection towards God, a love to God, a delight in God, and

a corresponding benevolence and benignity in all his emotions and feelings towards man. Well, then, sin does *not* domineer over him, sin has not the dominion in this man : on the contrary, duty domineers, obedience domineers ; not sin, but righteousness, has the ascendancy : and he feels, by experience, this to be the case, just in proportion as he is clear in the knowledge, and full in the enjoyment, of Christ's Gospel. As the Apostle says, in the eighth chapter of this epistle, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit : " that in proportion as we believe, and are actuated by the Spirit, we trample sin indignantly under our feet.

And this I take to be the true and exact distinction between a believing and an unbelieving man. The unbelieving man is ruled by sin ; he is ruled by anything and by everything ; by custom, by habit, by what obtains in society—by anything and everything, but the will of heaven, and the law of God. Sin domineers ; that is the tyrant which holds him in subjection. And on the other hand, the believer is sweetly, and blessedly ruled by the will of God, and keeps sin in subjection under his feet. *Formerly* sin mastered him ; *now* he masters sin, and holds it under ; keeps it down with a firm grasp, a decisive and determined mind ; knowing, that though the tyrant is still alive, he is crucified, and destined to be slain, and is undergoing a lingering, but a certain, death : "Sin has not the dominion over him."

I am quite aware that there may be a conflict ; that the flesh may lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; there may be many efforts made, on the part of the remains of a corrupted nature, to regain its lost power. But God will preserve those who look to him for strength ; so that we shall have to say as Paul does, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And very speedily, when the body is laid down, (for "he that is dead is free from sin ;") there will be perfect emancipation ; there will be consummate purity ; so that the taint of evil shall never touch our being any more ; "being made free from sin."

There is, fourthly, *freedom from the sting and bitterness of sin*. We are conscious to ourselves, when we have transgressed, of remorse, of inward self-contempt, of extreme uneasiness : there is no comfort, there is no peace, as long as we are indulging sin, and under the power of it. Christ makes us free. His expiation presented to God, satisfies his justice, and magnifies his law. His precious blood, presented to us, pacifies and purifies the conscience ; takes away the sting, and the bitterness, and the uneasiness, and the misery which our sin had brought along with it. So that in proportion as we see and enjoy the merit and efficacy of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is in the mind—by heavenly light, and by certain principles—there is in the mind peace, not contention ; confidence, not confusion ; hope towards God, not despondency, not dismay, not alarm ; "beauty," not "ashes ;" "the oil of joy," not "mourning ;" "the garment of praise," not "the spirit of heaviness." So that if Christ has done his work in my conscience, and his doctrine has effected the proper change, and in the required degree, in my heart and nature, my spirit



and conscience are as serene, and calm, and innocent, as is the open, unclouded, countenance of the complacent Deity. "Free from sin." Oh, happy freedom! oh, delightful deliverance!

And, finally, *we are free from all the consequences of sin, and from these perfectly and for ever.* "The wages of sin is death;" but "he that believeth my sayings," says Jesus Christ, "shall never see death." "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ." The earthly and animal economy, without doubt, will be broken up; but the mind, the spirit, the thinking and sentient principle, will pass through that awful ruination, unharmed, and uninjured; will merge, and arise out of it, in purity, and splendour, and joy. The consequences of sin will not follow the emancipated and the glorified mind. We believe in no after pains; we believe in no penalties to be endured in another world; we look for no purgatory; we are persuaded there is no purifying fire to be undergone, when once we are escaped from all that is visible, and all that is elementary around us; but that Christ who has freed us from sin, from the penalty and the power, and the bitterness of it, will adorn us with beauty, and consummate our glorification in his immediate presence.

And as for the body, which has undergone the external injury, and which must be laid down in its state of decomposition in the tomb, we are assured that it will be raised up again, and be fashioned like unto Christ's own glorious body. So that whenever mine eye shall see the perfected, purified, exultant mind, inhabiting the body at the morning of the resurrection, having put on that its coronation robe, I may ask, Has that nature, has that being, sustained any injury, or undergone any loss, by reason of sin? I shall know that it is free from sin; bright as if there never had been any; beautiful, as if it had never seen corruption; and glorious as it had been from the very first; pristine in its constitution, in the full bloom of its moral beauty, and the unclouded sunshine of the divine favour: "Free from sin."

My brethren, do *you* understand these things? Are *you* washed from the pollution, and delivered from the defilements of sin? Is the curse gone, the condemnation removed? Is the tyranny broken, and the despotism destroyed? Is your conscience in peace? Does it congratulate you on your having found peace in the work of Christ? And are you looking for this freedom, this perfect freedom, of which I speak, in the world to come? Oh, it is heaven upon earth to have a distinct and realizing faith in the glory and purity of that heaven which shall be revealed.

We are said, in the text, to be *made* free. It is implied there is some power, some energy exerted upon us. And this is distinctly divine: we call it *grace*; we call it *the work of God*: there is a heavenly impression and impulse in it. God calls us to "arise," to come forth from our bondage; and we, hearing his voice, do come: but the power which gives us the ability to arise and to assert our freedom, is his own. Christ said to Lazarus, "Lazarus come forth;" and forth he came. And Christ says, if not with an audible voice, yet by an invisible power, to every sinner whom he intends to emancipate, "Arise, stand up from the dead; and I will give thee light and life:" and there is freedom: we are *made* free.

This freedom is ascribed in Scripture to *the Father*: "You hath he

quicken, who were dead in trespasses and sins :” “ We give thanks to the Father that hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; who hath translated us” (you will mark the expression) “ out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear Son :” in other words, who has made us free from sin, that we should be his servants : having our “ fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” *Christ* is said to make us free. It is his work to say to the prisoner, “ Come forth ;” to those that are in darkness, “ Shew yourselves.” He was anointed to preach recovery of sight to the blind, and the opening of the prison doors to them which are bound : “ and if the *Son* shall make us free, we shall be free indeed.” It is ascribed also to the *Holy Ghost*. “ Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” I infer that this work of effecting our emancipation and deliverance from sin, is the combined operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The council and the plan emanates from the Everlasting Father ; the carrying of it into execution, and undergoing the substitution, agony, and endurance of the penalty, is the work of his own Son ; and the application of this to our minds, by which we are personally made free, is the work of the Holy Ghost. “ Being made free from sin.”

Then, there are *instruments* employed. “ Ye shall know *the truth*, and the truth shall make you free :” in the open daylight of God’s revelation, where the knowledge of the Gospel is full and unshadowed round about, there is freedom. It is ascribed to *grace* ; and the more we know of it, and the better we understand the riches of the grace of God, the more shall we delight in the certainty, and riches, and the elevation of this same liberty. It is ascribed to *the work of the ministry*. “ I have sent thee,” it was said to Paul, “ to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.” And the truth of God, the grace of God, and the work of the ministry, all conspire and unite : and so Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, truth, grace, and human ministration, are all combined in bringing to pass this blessed liberty.

I will venture to affirm, that all liberty is sweet. *We* know not, in the civil and social sense, what it is to have the bonds broken, and the chain loosened, and the rod of tyranny broken before our eyes : multitudes (blessed be God !) there are who now know that liberty is sweet. It is sweet for a man to sit under the branches of his own vine, and the shadow of his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid : but there is no liberty so dear, so diffusive through all the powers and faculties of our being, as this spiritual liberty, which is given to us by Christ Jesus our Lord : “ being free from sin.”

Secondly, WE BECOME “ SERVANTS OF THE LORD.” Our deliverance from sin, in all its forms, is in order that we may be servants of God.

And this name, “ servant,” I would observe, is a name of beauty, excellence, and glory because it has been borne by Jesus Christ. “ My *servant* shall deal prudently.” It was a transcendent and unparalleled service which he rendered : his duty and service neutralize and overbear all the mischief, and misery, and ruin which was brought into the world by the disobedience of the first man. “ By the disobedience of one many were made sinners ; by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous.” And I insist upon it constantly, that it

is the one great, glorious, incomparable service of the Son of God, which renders our faint, feeble, blemished, defective service, in any degree acceptable to the purity of the Infinite Mind. Under the old covenant, it was works without Christ: according to the new covenant, it is Christ alone; Christ without works. By Christ without works are we free from sin, and justified in the sight of God. And yet though there be no works of merit for purchasing salvation, there is a service of God: "Servants unto God."

This name and title has been worn by the most distinguished men that ever lived. "Moses, the *servant* of God:" they sang "the song of Moses, the *servant* of God, and of the Lamb." "Hast thou considered my *servant* Job?" "Oh Lord," says David, "I am thy *servant*, and the son of thy handmaid; thou hast loosened from bonds;" the very similitude of the text; free from sin, and become God's servant. "Paul a *servant*;" "James a *servant*." These triumphed in nothing so much as that they had an opportunity of sustaining office for God, and doing duties for God, and rendering service in their free state to God. His service is perfect freedom.

How is it brought about? It is just in this way; in a very simple manner that we first of all receive the truth; the blessings of the Gospel, freeing us from sin, are brought by faith and knowledge into our nature. The natural effect of this is, confidence towards God—delight in him, love towards him. We cease to be afraid; our terror vanishes; the spirit of bondage gives way; and the spirit of adoption comes in its stead. This new view of God, in the light and grace of his Gospel, induces consecration. We are willing, we rejoice in being given up to the service of this God and our Saviour, revealed to us in the Gospel. In the beautiful language of Scripture we no longer yield our members "instruments of unrighteousness unto sin;" we no longer do anything in opposition to God, his will, his counsel, his interests—we become identified, one with him; his principles, his doctrines, and his cause. We yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from faith, and our members as the instruments of righteousness unto God. We become separated from, free, detached from the world; not touching any mean and unclean thing: and rejoicing in this name which we bear, and the service to which we are hastening. We become "the servants of God."

The inquiry, of course, terminates in this, What will the Master have us to do? "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the word contains the perfect record, the entire, simple, but ample communication of God's mind and will in every particular. And, being his servants, the inquiry is from his word; "What is my condition? What is my capacity? What is my object? What is my state in the world, or in the Church? I am God's servant in all these various points and particulars, to do his will." But we must be "free from sin" before we can become "the servants of God." The Apostle has put it stronger in this passage: "None of us liveth unto himself, and none of us dieth unto himself; whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether living or dying therefore, we are the Lord's:"—the servants of God.

It is required in a servant that there be integrity; that there be faithfulness; that there be diligence; that there be affection. One would not wish to be served by hirelings; by persons who desire nothing in the world but what they

can gain by us. As men we would be served for love; we would be served as being delighted in. And exactly so is it with God: all his true-hearted servants are faithful, and diligent, and affectionate, and would not, for all that the creation could bestow, be separated from him, or from his house, or from his family, or from the duties which belong to them: "We become servants of God."

Let me only add here, that if it be your aim and purpose in the enjoyment of Gospel blessings and Gospel privileges, and as "free from sin," to be "the servants of God," to be disentangled and disengaged from whatever is vile, and to be employing the abilities of your mind, and the powers and faculties of your body, only in what is true, and good, and holy, and wise, and lovely, and just, that you must do this in a perpetual struggle and conflict, the old principles will rise up and rebel: and though in heaven we shall be holy spontaneously, and without exertion, on earth we must contest every inch of the ground; and not until we receive the crown of life shall we cast away the scabbard. It is well to be God's servants; he has the clearest, strongest, and most incontestible right to us; and you do well to serve him: you can justify yourselves to the world, and to the devil, and to evil men, and to every accuser now; and God will justify you in your service in the last great day. We are "servants to God."

Thirdly, **OUR FRUIT IS UNTO HOLINESS.** There is a fruit unto sin; and the Apostle asks emphatically, "What fruit have ye, then, in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" There are the vines of Sodom; there are the grapes of Gomorrah: there is wine which is said to be poison, and the venom of asps. The meaning, doubtless, of the figure is, that there is a deep and terrible malignity in sin, and in sinful man. That is the fruit. The fruit is *here* said to be unto holiness; beautiful fruit; fruit as John the Baptist expressed it, "meet for repentance." "The fruit of the Spirit," it is said by our Apostle in the Epistle to the Galatians, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, fidelity, meekness, temperance:" these are the fruits unto holiness. "Holy fruits:" that is, fruits that are vital, fresh, blooming, luscious, beautiful to look upon: fruit unto holiness.

I am persuaded that there never has been any fruit unto holiness separate from the principles of the Gospel. Without faith in Christ, and the freedom from sin, which it secures, there is no holy fruit; and the whole pagan world is a barren wilderness. There is no holy fruit anywhere without the circle of Christ's real Church: there may be morals, which are dry, and barren, and sapless; which have no light, nor life, nor godliness in them; which have nothing of the bloom and the beauty of the skies upon them. There is no holiness but as it arises out of faith in Christ, and love toward the Lord Jesus. And I may add, that the beautiful fruits of holiness, spontaneous and blessed, grow out of Gospel principles: these are the proper means of receiving the Gospel: and the fruit shall follow.

It should be remarked, however, that in order to fruitfulness, there must be cultivation; we see in the world thorns and briars will grow fast enough of themselves: not so the corn and wheat, the wine and the oil. So it is in the case before us: there must be a diligence, and a circumspection, and a care, that we shew forth in our tempers and practice the various points of that



blessed light and beauty which is called in the text, holiness: "The fruit is unto holiness." I perfectly agree in the words of the great Hooker: "All the fruit we bring forth is so imperfect, so shrivelled, so defective, that we bring not God into our debt; we cannot insert him in our books, as if he were our debtor; as if he did owe us anything: on the contrary, we must appeal to his mercy, that he would pardon our sins, and pity our infirmity." Yet, notwithstanding this, we are rising up, and endeavouring, as grace is given, to bring forth fruit unto God; having our fruit unto holiness; knowing that as we do so, we glorify our Father in heaven.

I will only add, that if the Spirit be holy, and if there be the disposition and the desire to do the will of God: if we are aspiring after it, and mourn in every act and instance of our non-conformity to it, we are on the high road to his kingdom, where our holiness shall be as complete as we desire it to be. A man in this state of mind, is absolutely incapacitated for ruin; he *cannot* perish; he shall not go down to hell. What could he do there? He is ripening for heaven, and he shall come to be a partaker of the holiness of God; holy as God is holy; unchangeably, uninterruptedly, and for ever.

And THE END IS EVERLASTING LIFE. And I remark here that the end is everything. If it were so that the course of religion in this world were a course of sorrow, and sin, and trouble, and shame, and distress—if there were darkness and agony at every step—if *the end* were everlasting life, though the road were a road of darkness for a thousand years, it were worth the while to walk it. But it is *not*: the way is peace, the path is light, the progress is joy; the more religion, the more felicity: and then the end is everlasting life. And if it were so that the way of ungodliness were a way of mirth and triumph, of victory and joy, of prowess and of glory, of pomp and of honour, at every step, and through the most lengthened progress, *the end* would be eternal ruination. He must be a fool, to an extent which I have no language to express, who would walk it. It is not so: "there is no peace saith my God to the wicked:" it is a way of thorns and briers, of restlessness and dissatisfaction. Choose ye your own paths. May you be servants unto God, "having your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

The more I see of *this life*, the more I am persuaded, and the more I feel that it is a poor, sickly, smitten, sleepless, infirm, helpless, worthless, impoverished, dissatisfied life; irrespective of God and godliness, it is not worth having. And I am increasingly persuaded that *the life to come* is unbounded, and perpetual, and everlasting activity, conscious purity, splendid glory, and rest in His beatific vision. Oh, to come to the light which is everlasting! How that Scripture flashed on me in the reading of it this morning, as it never had before—"He that is dead is free from sin." Oh, to sin no more! May you and I come to the sweetness of that consummation. Those of you who have, abide in your joy; maintain your privilege. And are there none who are saying with King Agrippa, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" all that I have to say is, "I would that every one of you were not only almost, but altogether such as I am, except the infirmities which still belong to me."

"Let us arise and shine; for our light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us."

## COMMUNION WITH GOD.

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REV. G. CLAYTON.

YORK STREET CHAPEL, WALWORTH, DECEMBER 18, 1823.

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“Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.”  
LAMENTATIONS, iii. 57.

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How much do they lose who are strangers to habitual communion with God and of this description what multitudes are there in this world, who, although they are preserved by God's providence, and supplied out of God's bounty, yet it is to be feared, there are thousands and tens of thousands who live without any direct and practical reference to that Being in whose hands their breath is, and whose are all their ways. They rise in the morning, they rush into the multiplied affairs of the present life; they visit, they recreate, they retire to rest in the evening, without having made any appeal of the mind to God, any more than if he had no existence, and they had no dependance on him. Now what shall cure this ungodliness, this mournful alienation of heart from God, on whom we hang, and at whose bar we must appear? Nothing but the blood of reconciliation; the grace of renovation: we are to be brought near to God by the death of his Son, and must be born again of his Holy Spirit, in order that we may become a kind of first-fruits to God. Then an intercourse will commence, and it will be steadily maintained; a converse with heaven, elevating, ennobling, and consoling. We shall see God in all events; we shall hear his voice in all circumstances; we shall see God in all things, and all things in God.

And it must appear evident, that this devout habitual converse with the Most High, in all circumstances and events, must tend to give a higher zest to our enjoyments, whatever they may be; and, at the same time, to take off the corrosion and the edge of those anxieties and trials, with which we may be exercised. So that every way, a life of spiritual communion with heaven, has the decided advantage over all other species of life.

When Jeremiah was cast into the low dungeon, it pleased God to visit him there; so that he recorded, “Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.” When Daniel was consigned to the lion's den, Jehovah sent his angel and stopped the lion's mouth. And when the three pious children were condemned to the furnace; there was seen a companion walking with them like the Son of God; and the consequence was, not a hair of their head was singed, nor their garments impaired, neither the smell of fire upon them. And the same providential interpositions which were vouchsafed to God's people in old time, are afforded at the present moment: for no Scrip-

ture is of private interpretation; the things which were written aforetime, were written for our use. And I trust there are those here, and not a few, who can say, "Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not." It is by a life of communion with God that we ensure the most gratifying recollections of the past, and the most pleasing prospects for the time to come.

In contemplating these words, let us consider, first, the condescending visitation of God's presence and grace which the text records; secondly, the principal season at which this approach of God to the mind took place: "In the day that I called upon thee;" and, thirdly, the reviving and animating effects of this upon the mind.

There is a sense in which God is near to every one of us, as he is our Creator and Preserver, in whom we live and move, and have our being. "That thou, O Lord, art near, thy wondrous works declare." He is not far from every one of us; he compasses our path, our lying down and our rising up, and is acquainted with all our ways. But from this simple consideration alone, nothing consolatory can arise to the afflicted mind: for, if God be an enemy, as he is to every sinner, then the consciousness of his presence, his nearness and inspection, will rather infuse dread than inspire hope; and we shall be ready to say, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" God is angry with the wicked every day; and therefore, out of the general and essential presence of God with all his creatures, no direct and specific consolation can arise to the afflicted. What are we then to understand by this expression?

First, *it supposes that all obstacles to his approach were removed.* The way of God's approach to sinners is barred by the claims of justice, the requirements of God's law, and the demands of his purity; and till the mediation of Christ be understood, and the way be opened by him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," there can be no drawing near of God to us, and no drawing near of us to God. The language of the text supposes that all these obstacles have been removed, and that the way was opened to a delightful intercourse.

Secondly, *It asserts an actual intercourse with God.* "Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not." That is, by the manifestation of his presence. "If any man love me, I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. There is such a thing as the presence of God manifested to them that believe. For if human minds can communicate their thoughts and sensations, whether pleasurable or painful to each other, it seems rational to think that the Deity can communicate of his presence to the souls of his people. What else are we to understand by his "dwelling in their heart," "working and dwelling in them," unless it imply the manifestation of the Divine presence?

Thirdly, *It asserts that the tokens of his love were enjoyed; and nearness and familiarity of friendly communication.* It implies also the influences and consolations of the Holy Spirit: for it is by his Spirit that God is pleased to maintain converse with his people. The Spirit of God dispensed is the fruit and consequence of the Saviour's intercession, and ensured to believers as their happy portion in every age. The Redeemer said to his disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you."

"The troubled conscience knows thy voice,  
 Thy cheerful words awake our joys :  
 Thy words allay the stormy wind,  
 And calm the surges of the mind."

Secondly, CONSIDER THE SEASON WHEN THIS APPROACH TO THE MIND WAS ENJOYED. "*In the day that I called upon thee.*" You will observe that *this was a day of trouble*. Jeremiah the prophet, was persecuted, and bitterly persecuted, for the sake of his message. He had denounced the judgments of God against the people, and the rulers of Jerusalem. The king and the privy-councillors imagined that the faithful servant had discouraged the minds of the people, by predicting the capture of the city; and they regarded him as a sort of spy to his country. They therefore loaded him with chains, made his life exceeding bitter by persecution and violence, and he was consigned to a dungeon full of mire; in which he sunk almost to the extermination of his life.

Now this dungeon may be considered as a representation of temporal adversity, or spiritual distress; to both of which the children of God are subject. Sometimes they are subject to *temporal adversity*, in which there appears no door of hope or relief. They are let down with cords into the depths of the pit, from whence they seem as if they could not escape. "We know not what to do, but our eyes are to thee."

This may represent *spiritual darkness*, dismay, and gloom; when God may withhold his countenance for a season, and when it may be said, "The Lord hath forsaken me."

Secondly, *A day of trouble ought to be a day of prayer*. "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." When Jonah was cast out into the sea, and swallowed up by a fish, and the deep waters were about his head, then prayer was the grand relief, and he looked to God's habitation with faith and earnest desire. And when Jeremiah was condemned to the dungeon, then he called on God. And there is no relief so availing when troubled externally or internally, as to approach the throne of mercy, to cast ourselves at the feet of Him who alone is able to relieve and support, and to wrestle with Him for the communication of his presence to bear our affliction, and for deliverance. Remember a day of trouble ought to be a day of prayer; and if it be not, we have no reason to suppose that our affliction will be sanctified.

Thirdly, *God never treats with indifference the prayers of his children*. Though he does afflict, it is always for their good, and in kindness to their souls: and therefore it cannot be supposed he has a heart unfeeling and hard toward those whom he afflicts. While he inflicts the stroke, his bowels yearn; and he says, "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." Never will he turn a deaf ear to the voice of your prayer, and especially in the day of trouble.

Fourthly, *When God in answer to the prayers of his people is pleased to draw near to them, it must have a most reviving influence on the mind*. We all know that human sympathy is very acceptable in trouble, when sickness invades our families; when losses threaten us in our circumstances; when we meet with unkind treatment from those from whom we expected different conduct. The friend who with an aspect of kindness and sympathy mingles in our grief, we



value; and we are taught the worth of such a friend. Now if it be possible for one human being to be the source of such relief; of how much greater value is the sympathy of the blessed God, when he does not disdain to visit the dungeon of humiliation, and to mingle in the affliction which he brings, and to draw near to our souls in the day in which we call upon him? Our Redeemer has a heart. "We have not a high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity." He bare our griefs, and he is near to us in the day of distress.

Thirdly, CONSIDER THE ANIMATING EFFECTS OF SUCH VISITATIONS FROM GOD ON THE MIND. Here it is obvious to remark, first, that the best and most eminent believers may be the subjects of fear: and secondly, that if they enjoy the assurance of God's presence they may dismiss their fears, and rejoice with exceeding great joy.

First, *the best and most eminent believers may be the subjects of fear.* Fear is among those passions, which God has implanted with a view to our advantage; but when carried to undue height it becomes a source of inconceivable torment and misery; so that the man who is the victim of fear, needs to have nothing more to render his condition wretched. And there are some of the best men, who are incident to those apprehensions; some from natural constitution; some from more timidity and apprehensiveness of their nature than falls to the lot of other men. You know that in the animal world, the lion is distinguished by his courage, the hare by its timidity. And thus in human minds there is a vast diversity: some are bold and unacquainted with the passion of fear; others are the contrary, and tremble like an aspen leaf, and are liable to fear even where no fear is. This must be resolved partly into natural constitution, and by early injudicious treatment. For very few understand how to raise the tender plant: they do not consider the dispositions which manifest themselves in children, and they are rigorous and severe, over-bearing and haughty. The natural disposition sinks, and impressions of terror are made on the mind; which accompanies such individuals to their last day. It may be ascribed also, to something mental; gloom, and depression of spirit; which have a tendency to render men extremely fearful. And therefore, you meet with men who are depressed and sink under every trifling alarm: fear assails them on the right hand and on their left; mingles with their food, their daily exercise, and their nightly repose; so that they are often a terror to themselves and to others. Nor can I doubt that Satan is the great adversary as well as the great destroyer of the human race. He knows something of our constitution, and neglects not to avail himself of every opportunity in order that he may assail the mind, and the better succeed in the temptations by which he is anxious to entangle and overthrow us.

Thus it is that what with the frailty of our constitution, the injudicious treatment of early years, the circumstances in which we may be placed, and the temptations of Satan, it does sometimes happen that the very best of men are afflicted with fear. So was Jacob, when he said, "All these things are against me." So was David, when he feigned himself mad before a heathen king, because he had not courage to encounter the difficulties of his situation. So have others, of which we have account given us in the sacred page. And not a few in the present time have fallen a prey to this unavailing passion.

Secondly. *But there is everything in a consciousness of God's presence with us to disarm these terrors.* "Thou saidst, Fear not." God says this by his word and spirit, and by his providence, and by the exhortations of Christian friends: by various forms and modes of address he says, "Fear not." And if he be with you, what have you to fear? If God be your friend, what shall impress dismay on your hearts? Remember he is an omnipresent friend; he knows precisely the circumstances in which you are placed, the difficulties by which you are surrounded, the dangers of which you are apprehensive: and he is able to provide an efficacious remedy. It is something to know that God is our friend, and that he knows all things. His power is equal to his knowledge. Is anything too hard for the Lord? What shall circumscribe omnipotence, or limit Him who sways the creation, and who formed all things by the word of his mouth?

\* "Treasures of everlasting might  
In our Jehovah dwell:"

Therefore trust in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord is everlasting redemption. He giveth power to the weak, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

He is not only a friend omnipotent, but he is ever ready and at hand to help, succour, and redeem. We may have wise friends, and we may have powerful friends: but they may not be in immediate contact with us; and in the day of difficulty they may be disqualified for affording us assistance. The Psalmist says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." A *help*—a *present* help—a *very present* help. And, therefore, to suppose the very worst, the Christian has no occasion for fear; he has nothing which needs to excite apprehension. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Supposing your health should fail, yet if God be nigh, he will sustain your spirit, soothe and animate your mind amidst the day, and in the dissolution of the mortal frame. Suppose those friends who by their kindness give all the flavour and enjoyment to life, are removed, or that their regard should be alienated; yet you may say, "Though the fig-tree do not blossom, neither fruit be in the vines, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." I will suppose that death shall approach you with his dart and with his sting: you may defy that dart, because the poison has been spent; and you may defy that sting, because it has been extracted and rendered harmless, in consequence of the triumphs of the Lord Jesus Christ over that enemy. So that the believer may say, "Though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." And when you come to engage with the thickest of the powers of darkness, you may say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

In concluding this subject, first, admire the condescension and grace of the Divine Being, that he is pleased thus to notice the circumstances in which we are placed, and to afford relief under every painful dispensation. When we reflect on the distance between him and us; how far remote we are from his moral image; how, justly, and without impeachment to his honour, he might leave us to grapple with the final adversary, death: then consider, in spite of

all this, how he has made provision for an approach of the Deity to the mind ; that he will manifest his presence to us by the communication of his Spirit ; that he will afford all this in the day of trouble, when his ear is open to the cry of his people : I say when we consider this, we may well stand amazed at the goodness of God, and at his favour toward his rebellious people. "What shall we render to him for all his benefits?"

"In vain might lofty princes try  
Such condescension to perform."

Behold him sympathizing with you, relieving you under the burden of your cares, and speaking comfortable words to you. "Happy is the people who are in such a case: yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord."

Secondly, We should be led to inquire whether we know anything of the approach of God to the mind. Can you look back on any period of your history in which you can recollect making a note similar to that recorded by the prophet? You may have been in the dungeon: recall to mind past years, and see if you have not some record which tallies with the language of my text. Remember such a domestic trial—such a painful bereavement—such an overwhelming adversity. Give thanks to God, who will not leave you unsupported. And remember, you are to gather encouragement from what is past. "Because thou *hast been* my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I trust." "I cried to him, and he strengthened me." Make a new record, if God has vouchsafed the manifestation of which you have been hearing, and do not allow them to pass without notice. I invite you to set up your Ebenezer, and to say, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me."

Thirdly, I infer the misery of those who are far from God, and strangers to spiritual intercourse. "Behold all that are far from him perish." Now, if you know nothing of drawing near to God, when he draws near to the soul, then you have to learn the first lesson in Christianity, the approximation of mind to the Deity, and the approximation of Deity to the mind. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Have you ever reflected on the danger of separation from him? How soon will that drop be dried up which is separated from the fountain! how soon will that ray become dark which is cut off from the fountain of day. And how may the soul despair which has no communication with God, nor God with it.

I therefore entreat you to draw near: cleanse your hearts, ye sinners; and purify your minds, ye double-minded. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Is it nothing that a way has been opened to Deity by the incarnation of the Mediator? Is it nothing that Jehovah himself has drawn up a path-way, by which he may pass to you, and you to him? And shall all this be despised? May God forbid it. While mercy pleads, and while the Spirit waits, seek an introduction to the Divine presence of Him who is life, peace, and glory.

Let us look forward to the hour of our introduction to God. It is heaven upon earth when he draws near to the soul: it will be the heaven of heavens when the soul shall draw near to him. Then shall we know even as we are known; we shall see God without an interposing veil; see him, not as we do now, mediately, through ordinances; but immediately; when the curtain of

eternity shall be drawn, and when we shall meet the full gaze of his face, and be for ever with him and like him. "Now are we the sons of God; it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but this we know, when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

How happy they who have left this world, and are now expatiating in yonder fields of light and felicity. How well worth every sacrifice to be made partakers of that immortal felicity at the right hand of God.

"I'd part with all the joys of sense,  
To gaze upon thy throne  
Pleasure springs fresh for ever thence,  
Unspeakable, unknown."

May these pleasures be yours to all eternity, for Christ's sake, Amen.



## THE CHARACTER OF CORNELIUS.

REV. J. MARSHALL, A.M.

TOLBOOTH CHURCH, EDINBURGH, SEPTEMBER 7, 1834.

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- \* There was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."—Acts, x. 1—8.
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**DURING** the early periods of the world, the tidings of the existence of a God were presented indiscriminately to the people of all nations: the inhabitants of the world had opportunities of becoming acquainted with their Maker, had they only availed themselves of the advantages that were afforded them. Adam was admitted to the most friendly intercourse with God in Paradise. The events which befell him when he sinned were well adapted to illustrate Jehovah's character; and Adam was preserved for several centuries after he fell, to be the instructor and the counsellor of his race. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied respecting Christ—not only foretold his first coming, but likewise gave information respecting his second coming. Noah was a preacher of righteousness: and although we read particularly of no others, yet we have every reason to conclude that there were other preachers and other prophets besides Enoch and Noah, whom God admitted to personal communication with himself, and by whom he sent messages to mankind at that early period of the world's history. However, its inhabitants were not disposed to avail themselves of their privileges; they departed from the living God; they did not like to retain him in their knowledge; and they at length fell into such a state of ignorance, and debasement, and rebellion, that God, in the exercise of merited indignation, destroyed them by a flood.

After this striking dispensation, God was pleased to deal with men very much as he had done antecedently to it: there was still no distinction between nation and nation: between people and people: and, in addition to the information which had been previously communicated, the flood was, in a very eminent manner, calculated to impress the descendants of Adam with a sense of the

importance of repentance, and of the danger to which they exposed themselves by venturing on in the path of rebellion.

Still, however, men did not seek God: after the flood they conducted themselves as preceding generations had done before them; and at length the period arrived when rebellion and idolatry were spread as wide throughout the world as they had been at the period when God said to Noah, "Behold, I, even I, will bring a flood upon the earth, to destroy the inhabitants of the earth."

To preserve, therefore, the knowledge of himself in the world, to prevent all acquaintance with him from being obliterated amongst mankind, Jehovah was at last pleased to select for himself a peculiar people, to confer upon this people very distinguished advantages, to make them the depositaries of his truth, the keepers of those Sacred Oracles that have come down to our day, and that still administer consolation and instruction to the Christian Church as they did, under the former dispensation, to the Jewish Church. Down to the period with which the verses we have now read are connected, this distinction between Jews and Gentiles was preserved. Jesus Christ was of the seed of *Abraham*: he came to *his own*, although his own received him not: his injunction—first to the twelve, and then to the seventy—was, "Go not to the Gentiles; into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and when about to leave the world to ascend to his Father and our Father, to his God and to our God—although he commanded his Apostles to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," yet at the same time he added, "beginning at Jerusalem." Now, however, this distinction was to be done away; the Gentiles were no longer to remain "strangers and foreigners," but were to be "fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God"—were to be admitted, through the Lord Jesus, to all the privileges enjoyed by their Jewish brethren.

In the character of Cornelius, who was the first among those who had not been circumcised who was publicly admitted a member of the Christian Church, there is much that is interesting, and much that is calculated to afford us practical instruction in the view which is in these verses given of the character and previous conduct of this Centurion. "There was a certain man," we are informed, "in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."

From these words it is obvious, in the first place, *that previous to the admission of Cornelius into the Christian Church*, previous to his being made acquainted with the doctrines of the Gospel, as preached by the Apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, *he had been made a convert to Judaism*; he had been led to renounce the idolatries of heathenism; he had been led to worship the living and the true God. He is here spoken of as "a devout man, and one that feared God;" that is, the true God, the God whom the children of Israel worshipped and served.

There were two distinct classes of proselytes at this period of the history of the Jewish Church. There was one class who not only admitted the truth of the Jewish religion, but submitted to circumcision, and in this manner became "debtors to do the whole law," to observe all the ceremonies of the Mosaic economy. There was another class who remained uncircumcised, but yet

worshipped the God of the Jews, received the religion of the Jewish people, and conformed their lives to those moral precepts which that religion enjoined upon their observance. To this class of proselytes it seems very obvious Cornelius belonged. He had not been circumcised, but, at the same time, we are informed he “feared God:” and, fearing God, he would be led to make himself acquainted with the will of that God, as unfolded in the Jewish Scriptures; fearing God, he would conform himself to his will, he would receive the doctrines inculcated in the Jewish Bible, he would yield himself to the precepts which the Scriptures enjoined.

From this we may learn a very important lesson. Here we read of an individual who was once a heathen, who was born, and had been educated, amongst heathens, who held the highest station in the Roman army, and who was exposed to all the snares connected with that station. We find him, notwithstanding the very disadvantageous circumstances in which he was placed, coming to the knowledge of the living and true God; when that knowledge was obtained, by having yielded himself to its influence, living in the fear of that God, making a surrender of himself to the service of that God. Thus it was with Cornelius: is it so with us? Our circumstances have indeed been very different from those in which he was placed. We have been born, and we have been educated, amongst Christians: we have been taught from our infancy the nature and the perfections of the living and true God; we have been taught to regard it as our first duty to love, and to revere, and to serve him: and oh! if in these circumstances we serve him not, but live in indifference about him, or go on trampling upon his authority and his laws, how will Cornelius, and many others, who, like him, were placed in circumstances of a most disadvantageous character, rise up against us in the day of judgment, and pronounce upon us the sentence of merited condemnation!

In the second place, we here read not only that Cornelius feared the God of the Jews, but that he was “*a devout man.*” There are persons who profess the true God, the God of the Bible, who hold in detestation the idolatries of heathenism, whose creed is in perfect accordance with the revelation given us of the living and true God, whose external conduct is in a high degree correct, perhaps exemplary, and who yet, in the midst of all this, are by no means entitled to the appellation of “devout.” “Devout” is a word that, in a very particular sense applies to God—to the influence he has over the mind, the thoughts, the affections, the desires, the purposes of the soul. It is only the man who delights in thinking about God, and who delights in growing conformity to the mind and to the will of God, and who delights also in the prospect of the final enjoyment of God, who can be pronounced a devout man.

Now, there are individuals, respecting whom the assertion may be made that we have been just adverting to, and yet regarding whom it cannot be inferred that they thus set God before them, and thus delight in God. They acknowledge the fact of his existence: they conform their creed to the revelation he has given; they likewise avoid in their external conduct all grosser sins: but then they think more about the world than about their Maker, they long with far greater eagerness, after the possession of present objects of enjoyment than the friendship of Him who made them, and at whose judgment-seat they are by and by to stand. And with respect to their enjoyments, they have no

association of happiness connected with God: all their associations are connected with the objects and the sources of enjoyment that are about them. It was not so, however, with Cornelius. He was a devout man, and God had the place in his thoughts, in his affections, in his purposes and designs, which the word "devout" is calculated to comprise. Let us inquire whether it be so with us. Let us inquire whether we have something more than an orthodox creed, and a merely external conformity to the mind and will of Jehovah. Let us inquire as to the place he has within our breasts. Let us remember that in heaven he has the supremacy in the hearts of all: there all delight in him: all love him supremely: all think more about him than about anything else whatsoever. Then let us remember that, if heaven be our home, we ought now to seek preparation for it, by on earth becoming devout, having something of the devotedness here that characterizes the inhabitants of that glorious and happy place.

In the third place, *there are individuals who are most punctilious in the external service of Jehovah, who make these observances a cloak for the neglect of other very important duties.* The Pharisees, for instance, could not be characterized as devout, though they were most strict in the observance of devotional exercises. They made long prayers; they paid tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin: but, at the same time, the same Scriptures that inform us of these facts tell us, that while they made long prayers, they "devoured widows' houses"—while they paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, they neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith. This was the case with respect to the Pharisees: they preserved the external appearances of devotion; but they not only neglected other duties, they made these external services a cloak for the commission of very atrocious sins. It was not so, however, with Cornelius. He feared God; he was a devout man; and under the influence and feeling of a devotion, and a genuine fear of the God whom he served, he not only was just towards his fellow creatures, but he was kind, he was merciful. We are told of him that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people."

Is this, too, a feature in our character? Do we profess to love God? Do we show that we love him by loving our neighbour also? Do we profess like Cornelius to fear God? Do we show that we fear him by keeping in remembrance that the property we possess belongs to him—that we are called upon to use it in the way that he has expressly appointed; and that, as he has commanded us to supply the wants of our neighbours—not only to say, "Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed," but to put forth our hands for the accomplishment of these objects—that on this account it is our imperious duty to God as well as to man in this manner to employ our substance, in this manner to act in accordance with the injunctions of Him to whom the earth belongs and the fulness thereof?

Again, we are here told respecting Cornelius, not only that he himself feared God, and was devout, and gave alms to the people, but that *he also sought to be instrumental, and was successful in his endeavours, in inducing the members of his household to cherish the same spirit, and to manifest that spirit by a similar line of conduct.* God has not only divided the human race into kingdoms, and empires, and nations, and communities, but into families: and



he has made this subdivision, that the individuals placed at the head of these families may exert their influence over those who are placed under their care, in inducing them to seek the God of their fathers, and to give themselves up to his service. In this manner we find Cornelius employing his influence: we are told, not only that he feared God, but that he "*feared God with all his house.*" It is a very striking illustration of the influence which, by his example and his instructions, he exerted, not only over his children, but even over his servants, his domestics. We read at the seventh verse that "when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him." This was another *trait* in the character of this individual.

Oh, my brethren, with our far greater advantages, let us seriously inquire whether we, too, are seeking, not only ourselves to serve God, but to induce the members of our households to go and do likewise? We hear much in these days of government, of the best way of ruling empires, and nations, and communities; but it would be well for every man to keep in mind, every man particularly who is placed at the head of a family, that God has given him the government of a circle, for the mode in which he acts toward that circle he is one day to be called to a solemn account; well for every man to inquire whether, with reference to this stewardship he is thankful; or whether or not he is seeking to use it for God, and for the interest of the souls of his children and his servants; or whether it be not the case, that by an example of heedlessness about spiritual and eternal things, he is doing what he can to lead those connected with him down to death, to continue them in indifference also, and to impress on their minds—that it is a matter of no moment whether they seek God or not, whether they are prepared for death and for judgment, or not.

Still further, it is obvious from what we here read, not only that Cornelius was a man who feared God, who was devout, who gave alms, who was faithful to his own soul, and to the souls of the members of his family, but that *he was a man who felt his guilt in the sight of God; who felt his actual dependence on the grace and strength of God.* There is no way in which a sense of sin and of our dependence on God will be found more strikingly exemplified than by our prayer. The man who is self-righteous will pray continually: but when he does pray his prayers will resemble that of the Pharisee who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, idolaters, or even as this publican." The man, on the other hand, who feels his sinfulness in the sight of his Maker, who is sensible of his entire dependence on the grace of his Maker, will be found often on his knees seeking the forgiveness, the grace, and the strength that he stands in need of. So that by the fact of a man praying or not praying—by the fact of the frequency or the infrequency of a man's prayers, you may judge of the humility of his spirit in the sight of his Maker, of his sense of sin and dependence on God for pardon.

Respecting Cornelius, you will observe, it is stated in the conclusion of the second verse, that he "*prayed to God alway.*" He was regular and constant in the observance of the stated times of devotion and prayer prescribed by the Jewish Church: but besides this we are taught from the expression that is employed, that, in addition to the observance of the stated periods of prayer, the spirit of supplication was often poured out on him; that his soul frequently

found expression in the exercise of humble petitions for those blessings that are in accordance with God's will; namely, the forgiveness of his sins, the sanctification of his heart, the communication of assistance requisite to enable him to go on in his Maker's service.

Let us inquire, whether or not, in this respect also, we resemble him. There are persons who have excellences, but, alas! these excellences only foster pride within their hearts—make them feel a kind of independence of God—make them feel as if they had no need of his pardon, as if these excellences made atonement for their defects in his sight. It was not so with Cornelius: is it not so with us? Amidst all *his* excellences, though he was a devout man, he feared God, gave much alms to the people, was faithful towards the members of his household; still he felt the necessity of going often as a suppliant to the throne of the heavenly grace. Are *we* often there, too, my brethren? Do we feel our need of prayer? Are we conscious how much every day increases our guilt, and, consequently, our need of pardoning mercy? how every day brings along with it its temptations, its difficulties, its trials, and, consequently, the incumbent necessity, on our part, for asking that we may be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man.

In the last place, from what is here affirmed respecting Cornelius, we consider it to be obvious that *he had such views as might be arrived at under the Old Testament dispensation, of the way of acceptance with God*—of the way in which sinners were called upon to draw nigh to him. It is stated that he “feared God.” Under the influence of this fear, Cornelius would be led to consult the will of God: consulting that will, in the spirit of prayer and devotion by which he was characterized, it is altogether impossible but that he must have become acquainted with the nature and the design of the sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation; in some measure acquainted with the nature, and character, and object, of the one great sacrifice that was to be made for sin. Still, however, he was ignorant of Christ: he had the light of the Old Testament dispensation, but as yet the light of the New had not dawned in his soul. He lived in Cesarea; there were Christians there; but, in all probability, he had never come into contact with them—very possibly his mind had been prejudiced against them: and therefore he still remained in the attitude of a pious Jew, looking for the Messiah who was to come, instead of believing that Christ had actually made his appearance. Could it be expected, from the principles on which Jehovah invariably acts, that such an individual would be left in this situation? Was it to be expected that thus serving and thus seeking after God, that the promise of Christ would not be fulfilled, “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?” It was not so to be expected, and it did not so happen. Cornelius turning to account the light that he did enjoy, was, in the course of God's providence, blessed with an increase of divine knowledge; and in his case we may discern the encouragement we have to go and do likewise, and to turn to account what we actually possess, in the assurance, that by so doing, the promise of Scripture will be fulfilled—“He that hath”—or, as it may be translated, “He that *improves* what he hath, to him shall be given.”

Respecting Cornelius, we read at the third verse, “He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him,

and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."

Thus it was with Cornelius; in this manner was God found of him when he sought after God; in this manner was Jehovah's presence vouchsafed, and Jehovah's message sent to him, when, in accordance with the light that he possessed, he was walking in the path of duty. Therefore I would conclude by proposing for your considerations three very important questions, to press home on your consciences, and which we must seek satisfactorily to resolve, if, abiding in truth, we would be blessed with experience similar to that which Cornelius was privileged to enjoy.

In the first place, let me ask you, *Are you seeking God always?* There are many who hear of God, who hear of the obligations under which they are laid to God, who hear of the blessedness that is to be found in God, who hear of the consequences that will result from the rejection of God, of his friendship, and of his salvation, who yet never seek him, never bow in prayer to him; or, if they bow the knee, it is only the homage of the body; there is nothing at all of the homage of the spirit, nothing at all of the desire of the heart after those spiritual blessings which perhaps in words they may seek after. How is it in this respect with regard to *you*? Are you seeking God—in heart seeking him? Is it in truth your desire—is it not only your desire, but is it your first, your principal, your supreme desire, to have God's friendship, God's blessing, the light of God's countenance, and to lead a life of conformity to the mind and will of God? If it be not, you cannot expect to find it; you have no ground in Scripture to expect that God will in mercy come to you, or visit you with the blessings of his grace; you are putting him away from you—what can be expected but that he will put you away from him?

In the next place let me ask, *Are you seeking God in the way of his appointment?* Are you seeking him, through Christ Jesus, on the ground of what Christ hath done and suffered, as Cornelius did, in so far as he was enabled by the circumstances in which he was placed, and with the light which he enjoyed? He feared the God of the Jews; he was a devout man; and there is a circumstance here specified respecting him, that, in addition to what I have already stated, is illustrative of the regard that he had for the Jewish sacrifices, those sacrifices that were typical of the one great sacrifice to be made in Christ. We are informed in the third verse, that it was at the *ninth hour* that the vision of which we have the account was made to Cornelius; and there is every reason to conclude that it was whilst engaged in devotional exercises that that vision was made. As it was not in public; it must have been in private: and when this individual was thus engaged in the exercises of devotion—the ninth hour, it was the time when the evening sacrifice was wont to be offered. The fact of

Cornelius at this period of the day being thus employed in common with the Jews at that time, was illustrative of the regard which he had, in common with the believing amongst them, to the sacrifices of the Old Testament dispensation. Let us inquire, brethren, whether it is on the same ground that we proceed? We know far more than was unfolded to him of God's hatred of sin, of the way in which God is to be approached, of the way in which sinners may be accepted of him. Is it thus that we are seeking God? When we seek for the blessings of his grace, is it on the ground of what Christ hath done and suffered?

In the last place, not only did Cornelius seek God, not only did he seek him in the way we have already adverted to, but *he sought him also in the path of duty*, in the observance of those duties to which in the Jewish Scriptures he was called. This was the case with him, and the question is of the utmost importance *whether it be so with us*. We are to seek after God, and we are to seek after God through Christ: but then, my brethren, there is a *way*, and there is but one way, by seeking to walk in which, we are encouraged to expect, that God will be found of us, and that is the way described in the Bible as "the narrow way" that leadeth to everlasting life—the path of duty; an earnest desire, and a cherished determination, while we seek our Maker, to seek him through Christ, in the observance of all he has required of us. Is this the case with regard to you? If it be so, if you are found in prayer, if in your prayers you plead the name of Jesus, if it be an article of your creed that Christ is the only ground of your hope, while at the same time you are determined that sin shall in some way or other yet be indulged, rest assured of it that your profession, that your prayers, the soundness of your creed, not only will be found utterly unavailing, but at last will add to your condemnation—will prove how true it was, that, acting in direct opposition to the light of your own consciences, whilst you professed to call upon God, you at the same time wielded the weapons of rebellion against him.



## EVIDENCES OF POSSESSION OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

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REV. C. MALAN, D.D. \*

JOHN STREET CHAPEL, KING'S ROAD, SEPTEMBER 7, 1834.

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“ Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”—ROMANS, viii. 9.

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NOTHING is so awful as that declaration of the Lord, that the foolish virgins had also a lamp. This circumstance of the Parable of the Ten Virgins is very awful, for it is said, I repeat, that the foolish virgins had also a lamp. Perhaps many of you, having the lamp of Christianity, are foolish also, and have no oil. Oh, this is a very solemn thing, my friends, that a man may possess all the appearance of a child of God ; a man may be taught in the letter of the book, and be able to repeat it all through ; a man may be also able to utter prayers, and even to teach ; a man may be engaged in the worship of the Lord, and sing the praises of the Lord, and, after all, be nothing but a foolish virgin ; because all those things may be only a lamp, without any oil : all those things may be only the performance of the natural will, without the Spirit of God. And in our times, when Christianity is as it were a fashion, when so many preachings are delivered about it, so many books published, and so many conversations held concerning the things of the Bible, it is really no foolish thing to examine ourselves, and know whether we be or not of Christ ; whether we have or not the Spirit of Christ : because to fancy ourselves to be Christians, is not to be really so ; to congratulate one's self because we have some habits of spirituality in the letter, is not to be sealed with the Spirit of life. And really, brethren, it is very important to search our consciences, and to be engaged in the sight of the Lord in such examination.

As one of the ministers of God, and as your servant for Christ's name sake, I earnestly desire to be enabled to say unto you something useful to the soul. Therefore be now attentive ; and may the Spirit of our God lead me unto those communications, that I may point to the very characters of the Spirit of Christ, in order to prove to the soul that it is, or it is not, in the fellowship of Christ. “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his : ” therefore to boast about it, to speak about it, to preach about it, to write about it, is not to be Christ's when the Spirit of Christ is not present.

Now that Spirit evidences itself in three ways. First, the Spirit of Christ reveals Christ as he is ; he reveals him to the heart, renewed by the power of the Word of God, as life. Secondly, That the Spirit of Christ makes Christ precious : he reveals Christ not only as life, but as love, and makes him valu-

able; precious to the soul to whom he has revealed the Lord. Thirdly, the Spirit of Christ magnifies Christ, makes him glorious: and therefore, the soul to which he has revealed the Lord, desires to obey the Lord, and serve him. Let us turn to some particulars.

First, THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST REVEALS CHRIST AS HE IS, AS LIFE. Jesus was given by the Father, not to be a professor, nor a helper, but to be a Saviour. Jesus Christ was given by the Father to be the fulness of his people; to be a perfect Redeemer to the Church, to the redeemed people of God the Father. Jesus Christ was *given* by the Father; he was not bought by mankind, but he was given by the Father to those whom the Father has been pleased to love. And therefore, when he is revealed by the Spirit, he is revealed as he is, as having come from the Father; as having made himself one with his beloved bride the Church; as having really redeemed his people, and as having really given life to his beloved ones in himself. Therefore Christ is revealed by that Spirit which is called the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Life. Now the life is not a doubtful thing, but the life is a real thing; whosoever is taught from above by the Spirit of life *knows* Christ as "the life." To know Jesus Christ as the life is not merely to have some notion about him. The Lord Jesus, speaking of himself says, that he is food; that he is bread; that he is a beverage; that his flesh is indeed bread, and that his blood is indeed drink, for us. Therefore he does not reveal himself as being, as it were placed at a distance, to be only contemplated afar off, but he reveals himself as being food and drink; and as being therefore to be united to the soul to which he is given by the Father. And whosoever is called by the Holy Ghost has really not accepted Christ, but he is renewed to Christ, and Christ was revealed to him by the Father; not because that man has chosen Christ, but because the Father, who had chosen that soul before the world was, has been pleased to reveal the Son to that child of man; and thus has introduced life in that soul which was dead in its sins and trespasses.

Do you know Christ as life really? Do you know Christ in your hearts as the fulness of salvation? Is Christ revealed to you by the Spirit of Adoption? Or is Christ, as it were, placed at some distance from your soul; and instead of your taking hold of that life which is in him, and instead of saying to the Lord Jesus, "Thou art mine, and I am thine; O, my Lord, thou art in me;" instead of addressing the Lord Christ in that single way as being a living soul, have you still some doubts, some fears, and do you look to Christ as through a mist; feeling some form, that is to say, of self-righteousness? Consider what is in you. First, I would say, if there is among you a man not understanding that Jesus Christ is really life—the eternal life—and not understanding that this life it is for the Father to give; if there is a man who is not convinced in himself of his sinful state, and of his ruin, and who, therefore, thinks that he has still some worthiness, something good to be offered to God, that man has never known the Lord Jesus by his Spirit. There is no possibility of our knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as our fulness, if we suppose we have something good in us. The fulness is perfect. As long as man supposes he has something, even a little thing, even a very small worthiness, in him, he does not know the fulness of Christ; he does not know the perfect Saviour: he has some idol

remaining: he does not know the Saviour as the Almighty, the Infinite God, and how could that idol dwell with the Lord?

Therefore, my brethren, do pay attention to this; do consider this in your consciences. Are you certain in your hearts that you are empty; that there is no righteousness in you; that really you were under the sentence of the law, and under the curse? Do you grant this, that God is a perfect Saviour in his Son; and do you concede to the Holy Ghost this right, to *give* you life? Not to present to you, as it were, something you are entitled to; something in exchange only; do you feel yourself, as it were, before the Lord, saying, "Oh Lord my God, I know that I was, that I am in myself, a truly condemned sinner; that I could not present unto thee, my Creator, even one thought, even one emotion, even one desire, even one prayer, worthy thine acceptance. Therefore I part entirely with all pretensions to life and righteousness; and I do consider Jesus Christ as being the fulness of life. There is life in the Son of thy love, O Father; but it must be thy gift, thy free gift, to give us Jesus."

If you contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ in that light, you will find in your heart, that really you adore him; that you love Christ sincerely: you will see that he has come out from the Father, and that the Father hath sent him: you will find that the Lord Jesus is in you; that he is abiding in you; and therefore you will understand when the Spirit of God says to the Church, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?" You will find Jesus Christ in you; you will not find a silence of Christ, but Christ himself—the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Living God: and, searching out your inner man, your soul, you will find that really you, in the inner man, being convinced of your sinful state, and your utter ruin; you, in your inner man, will see that really the Father hath sent his Son, and that Jesus Christ is revealed unto you as being the Son of the Living God incarnate in our nature, without sin, and that he is really that Christ promised from the beginning; that he is the great Saviour given by the Father to the Church.

Examine, therefore, yourself; is the Lord Jesus Christ revealed unto you as life? Do you see that in him is the righteousness of God? And having believed on him, do you understand, that that very faith you have in his name is the gift of the Father unto you; and that the Lord Jesus being revealed unto you, you come, not because you have accepted him as a Saviour, but because he was given to you, because you have received him, because he was created in you by the power of the Spirit, the Word of our God? This is the first manifestation that we are taught by the Spirit of God: Christ is revealed unto us as life; therefore we have this conclusion—whosoever does not find in himself Jesus Christ as life; whosoever pretends still to have in himself some good, some desert, some righteousness, is not taught by the Holy Ghost. And, whosoever is still kept far from Christ, not daily embracing Christ, not daily trusting upon him, is not yet taught by the Holy Ghost; because the very teaching of the Holy Ghost is an inward teaching; is a mighty teaching; is a believing teaching. Thus the believer sees Christ as life, when he has been taught by the Holy Ghost.

And then, secondly, CHRIST IS REVEALED AS PRECIOUS. Here we begin

to unfold the secret of conscience. Here we begin to discern the difference between the Antinomian and the real Christian. Here we begin to touch with the finger the very conscience of the hypocrite. Here we begin to look to the oil in the vessels of the wise virgins: that is to say—Christ precious; Christ revealed; Christ known as he is—the Saviour; the beloved Bridegroom of his Church; the good Shepherd of his flock; the best brother of the family; the most tender friend of his redeemed ones. Here Jesus Christ is revealed as love; and therefore, the second question is this—Do you *love* Jesus Christ? “Ah, do I love Jesus Christ?” Now if any man be only an external Christian, he only in the habit of some *performance* of Christianity, he does not mind about loving Jesus Christ. He rises in the morning; he has, perhaps, his private prayers, and his prayers with the family; he goes to his office, to the business of this world, or to his own pleasure; he passes through the day, and he terminates it also in some exercise of worship: but Christ was not love; even the person of Christ was not introduced in the thoughts of that kind of Christian. He has some *science* of the Bible; some *habit* of prayer; some repetition of words was really in his mouth; and as he was with all this, perhaps, habituated to some correctness of manners, he has flattered himself as being a true disciple, a true observer of the institutes of Christ’s law. But Jesus Christ was not in his heart; the Lord himself was not thought of; his person was not precious: therefore the poor (that is to say the external) disciple has passed through his duties, as it were, but with the dead letter of Christianity: but the Friend, the Lord, the great Head of the Church, the Bridegroom of the bride, was not in his thoughts; he has not loved, he has only performed. But now, on the other hand, the true disciple, the man who indeed is married in his soul to Jesus, that soul which is a wise virgin, has begun the day, being with the Lord; “Here am I, at the beginning of a new stage of my short life; one of the redeemed of the Lord Jesus Christ; here am I, kept by my good Shepherd during my sleep; and now, in his fellowship, awakened by my God, as a babe by the kiss of his mother. Here am I, in the sight of that Lord, who was given to me by the Father, and who has given himself for me, in the spirit of faith and in the spirit of love, desiring, O my God, now to be with thee from the beginning of this day, and to pass through this day with thyself, my Lord. Therefore draw near unto me, O God, for thou art precious unto me.”

Really, beloved brethren, is not that the language of the Church? How does the bride speak unto the Bridegroom? Is it not said of the Lord Jesus Christ that his favour upholds the children of men? Is it not said that his love is so precious, so sweet, that it is “as ointment poured forth?” Therefore he is loved by the souls which he has redeemed. It is said of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is altogether lovely, and that he is the chief among ten thousand: and is he not described in the Book of God as being the fulness of life, the fulness of glory, the fulness of mercy and pity? Is not the Lord Christ evidently described in this Book as being indeed the precious gift of the Father, and the precious possession of the Church? Certainly. You know that if there be one thing stated there more frequently, from the first to the last page, it is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be loved, and that he is really and truly manifested as love to the Church. You know how he is spoken of through all the prophets; that they are all confidently looking to him as the Beloved, and constantly drawing the



heart and eyes of the Church to that loving beloved Redeemer. Therefore what could we think of the Christian who does not love Christ entirely? What, you have known him, you say, for many years, and yet do not love him as you love the parents who gave you birth, or than the friend you have known, perhaps, but for one year! What, you know the Lord Jesus Christ as having redeemed you, and yet he is less precious than a benefactor of this world! You know the Son of God as being the fulness of God and of the Father, both for this world and for eternity, as being indeed yours, and yet he is of less value to you than your parents, your children, or your own life! Oh, are you really called by the Holy Ghost?

But I know that some of you sigh and groan, and you say, "Oh that I did more love my God; oh that I did love my Lord more fervently, and prefer him to all things, even to my wife, my children, my father, and my mother, and my own self." Certainly; and you ought to do so; this is the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Here we are *certainly* taught by God—that Christ is to be loved above all things. Therefore have we this conclusion, "I am not taught of the Holy Ghost since I do love the Lord so little!" Stop and consider, if really and sincerely you wish to love him more; consider if you are really dissatisfied with yourselves, because you do not love him enough. Consider if really in your private prayers and your secret meditations, you have, as it were, moved your heart to love the Lord more intensely, more habitually. Consider whether in your way you are desirous to speak unto him; to receive from him by his Spirit, a more powerful sense of his love unto you, and more also of power in you to love him. Ah, if you do that, certainly you shall obtain the blessing; because this is the teaching of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is manifesting the love of Jesus to the Church; and the grace of the Holy Ghost is moving the bride to love the Bridegroom by degrees; and this is proof of spiritual health, the wish to love more. Whosoever is satisfied with his love to Christ can certainly be no Christian; whosoever is dissatisfied with his love, and is desirous to love him more, that man is blessed. If you really wish in your heart to be more intimately acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire secretly to know him, as being your Friend, as being your Teacher, as being your example, as being in you, in the inmost part of your hearts, the very relish of your thoughts and desires; that is the secret teaching of the Holy Ghost.

And that teaching is evident in your dealings with the people of God, it is evidenced in this especially, that you desire to love his redeemed ones. Hear, you who have not been taught by the Holy Ghost, who are only nominal Christians, who have got, it is true, a lamp, but without oil, that as you do not mind about loving Christians, as you do not mind being one with the redeemed people of God, as you do not mind about spiritual conversation with brethren in the sight of the Lord, as you do not mind about brotherly fellowship, and as you are filled only with your knowledge and science, then you must know this—that Christ is not revealed unto you by his Spirit, because when Christ is revealed by his Spirit he is revealed as love; and when that love is revealed to the soul, that love desires to be united to love. This is the standing character of the true spiritual-minded Christian, that he loves his brethren; he loves the Church of his Lord; he does not merely love his own Church, his own society, his own form of Christianity, because to love his own form, his own faith, and

his own society, is found even among pagans in their state of idolatry ; but the soul which is really taught by the Spirit, the soul which has really received Christ as love, and who loves Christ, loves him in *all* his beloved ones : and looks through the scaffolding of the Church, and goes to the Church itself : that soul looks to Jesus *in* the brethren and the sisters, and not to any particular form of the Church. Therefore we have this proof ; that as long as there are divisions, and quarrels, and heart-burnings among any body of professing Christians, Jesus Christ is not known there by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost teacheth love, and not strife ; teacheth you to love, for Christ is entirely love himself.

My brethren, do consider this ; do you know the Lord Jesus as he is—as love ; as being the head of his own Church ; as being the good Shepherd of his own flock ? Oh, do you know the Lord Christ really, as being that love which manifests itself through all the members ? Do you love him in your brethren ? Do you love brotherly fellowship ? Do you love, not only those who think as you, but as many as adore the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire to serve him in sincerity ?

If so, then the third characteristic is found also in your heart, namely, that **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS REVEALED AS GLORIOUS.** This last characteristic relates especially to the exercise of obedience and hope. Of obedience below ; because the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of his Church ; because he has redeemed us with a price, and we belong to him ; “ Because, O Lord Christ, thou art King in Zion, and thou art the Glorious One, and the Lord the Father hath clothed thee, O Lord, with majesty and honour.” The Lord Christ, therefore, is really reigning, both by his love, his Spirit, and his truth, with authority over his beloved ones. Do you know the Lord Christ, brethren and sisters, by the power of his Spirit of Adoption ? The Lord Christ is unknown to you, unless you desire to keep his laws, and prefer his will to your own will. This is a precious science indeed ; this is the stem of that true faith, of that faith once given to the saints—holiness to the Lord : yea, my friends, holiness to the Lord. For during our stay here below, we do not belong to ourselves ; we were formerly servants of sin ; we are now in the bondage of grace—the sweet bondage of love to our God. The Lord Jesus Christ was given unto us by the Father as life ; he is established over us now as King. The Lord Christ is now the Living One ; he is overruling all things in heaven and upon earth ; he has power over all flesh ; but he has power over us to bless us, and to guide us, to defend and to protect his people ; to direct us, that we may pass, not by our own ways, but through his own path, and that we may find there both his power and his blessing. The Lord Jesus, therefore, is adored by you who have his Spirit. And those who do not obey him, who do not yield obedience, who do not mind about the commandments of the King of Zion, who pass through this life without thinking that there are such things as *laws* of this King of Zion ; do not presume that you are taught by the Holy Ghost. Oh, no : the Holy Ghost gives us to know, that we were bought by Christ, and that we belong to him, both in our bodies and spirits. The law of the Spirit of God teaches us, that if we belong to Christ, we do not belong to him only when we are engaged in the Church ; there is no geography in our obedience ; it is the same in the Church, in our closets, in our families, and among our fellow-creatures. The Spirit of

God teaches us, that our Lord is our Lord *really*, our Master really; that he is our King, and, therefore, all obedience is due unto him; and it teaches this by that very Spirit of love we have received from the Father, whereby we are stamped or sealed unto the day of redemption from our bondage.

And then the fruit of this Spirit evidences itself by the exercise of hope. Do you consider one thing, my beloved brethren, which is certainly striking, that if Christians exercise faith seldom when they believe the record written in the Book of God, if Christians exercise love among themselves very seldom, they exercise hope—the hope of glory. When ye meet together, ye Christians, you speak willingly of the doctrines of the Bible; if ye be spiritually-minded people, and are speaking together, the Lord Jesus Christ is introduced much among you, and you speak of him present: also you speak of your mutual love; and you are happy together. But are you not struck with the fact, that very seldom you muse on the anticipations of your entrance into the house of your Father? Is not this a very striking fact, and is not this a shame upon us, that instead of speaking together of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the glory which is about to be displayed in us, when we shall see him as he is—is it not a shame, brethren, that instead of realizing this, instead of speaking with pleasure and with earnestness of that blessed day, in which we shall part with this world and enter into heaven—is it not a shame that we so seldom realize that blessed promise, where it is said, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.” Is not this, indeed, brethren, a shame? It is because our faith is so weak; or, rather, our faith is untrue, our faith is not real, our faith is not single; we do not believe the Gospel as a fact—that we are saved by Christ, that we are risen with him, that we are one with him. We do not really believe that we are on our way to Zion; we have still doubts; or we have some idols; we look to Sodom and Gomorrah, instead of pressing forward to the mountain of our Lord. Surely, beloved brethren, you ought to feel this, as I wish you may feel it. Suppose that we were children of one family of this world, and were gathered together from various quarters; being all children of one family, how we should speak of our home, of our father, and of our father's house; and how we should speak together always of that blessed day in which we should arrive at our father's house! Oh, brethren, as one by one our brethren around us depart, we should not say mournfully, “Ah, they are gone;” but we should say with joy, “They are arrived! they are now in the house; they are now with our dear Father: let us take courage, and in a short time we also shall arrive.” But instead of that, we quench the Spirit; we grieve it; and instead of taking hold of that blessed hope, and rejoicing in it, we are, as it were, constrained to the contemplation by force. We are not thinking of the time when we shall *get there* but of the time when we must *part with the world*. Beloved brethren, this is not the teaching of the Holy Ghost; this is to be carnally-minded in some way; this is still to drag with us, in our path to heaven, the nets of this world. You are far from realizing that glory of our Lord, far from anticipating the glory of that day in which you shall see him; you are averse from the thought of it. You certainly are not taught by the Spirit of Christ, because the Spirit of Christ is revealed not only as life and love, but also as glorious.

I ought to stop, and beseech you, my brethren, who have proved that Spirit of Christ, to be attentive to his teaching and to his word; to consider sweetly and solemnly, that as the Spirit of God has taught you Jesus Christ and his fulness, that you should dwell always on the fulness of Christ; when you have doubts, and when you are sensible of your feebleness, of your inconsistency, that you would immediately take hold of that fulness, and exercise immediately, not a legal repentance, but a filial one, a godly one; saying, "Oh Lord, thou art mine, therefore I would return to thee as a child before its father, as a redeemed one before its Redeemer." Then stir up constantly your soul, and the feelings of your heart, that you may love the Lord Jesus Christ; realizing first this—that he loves you tenderly; saying to your soul, "Oh, my soul, my Lord loves me, and loves to unfold his love to me." Take courage, and meditate upon his tenderness and fidelity, and that oneness of love which is in all the Church of Christ. Try to love the brethren; not because they think as you do, and are of the same church as you are, but because they are Christ's. Love Christ, and love Christ's redeemed ones; oh, love the children of Christ's family, and exercise that fellowship, that communion with yourselves, which you will by and by exercise in heaven—that love which comes from the heart of the Father, and from the heart of the Son.

And then, beloved, exercise also, in daily obedience and watchfulness, a great deal more hope; looking to the glory of your Lord; contemplating him as he is at the right hand of the Father, and as you will see him when you will part with this world, and reach a blessed eternity. Realize this, my brethren; remembering that though you are still for a while passing and travelling here below in this world, you are not of the world, because you are the redeemed ones of Christ.

And now if there be any one of you who does not find these things in his soul, I do beseech that child of man to consider seriously that Christ is life, love, and glory, *only* as he comes from the Father; and that it is necessary for you, my fellow men and fellow sinners, to turn to that Christ, and believe on him, and take hold of the promise of the Father in him, "Whosoever believeth in Christ hath life." And you must do this to-day, because you do not know whether to-morrow is yours: to day is yours, this hour is yours. Take heed. May the Lord, before whom we are gathered, grant a blessing to this meditation, according to his grace.



## THE CHRISTIAN'S FELLOWSHIP IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

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REV. J. MITCHELL, D.D.

BROUGHTON CHAPEL, EDINBURGH, SEPTEMBER 7, 1834.

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"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."—2 CORINTHIANS, iv. 10.

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THE connexion between the words of the text and the solemnities of the Sacramental Service in which we have been so lately engaged, is extremely obvious: and it is hardly less evident that they have reference to the state of the thoughts, the feelings, and the activities of the Christian, which comprehend summarily the peculiarities of the divine life in the soul of man.

In looking at the context you will perceive, that in a considerable manner the language of our text has respect to something that was peculiar to the Apostle and his brethren in these times. He tell us himself, elsewhere, that he bare in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus; alluding, most probably, to those vestiges of stripes and stonings which remained about him. He tells us in this passage, that he and they were always delivered to death for the sake of Christ: and he may refer immediately to those exhibitions of suffering, and to that readiness to die, which the Apostles in early times felt, and which is too manifest to be overlooked. They trod sometimes in a path of blood; at all times in the way of suffering; and they were called continually to face death, to be ready to meet their last end, which they were led constantly to expect. And under this they had peculiar support and divine aid. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."

Yet we shall, in all probability, circumscribe far too much the spirit and purport of our text, if we refer entirely to those external sufferings, and to that preparation for death, which were peculiar to these times, and which the Apostle was called to endure and to exercise. It should seem unquestionably referable to a certain state of heart and mind, and to a certain course of service and of life, which belong peculiarly to the champions of the cross, to the advocates of Christianity, to believers in the great facts of the Gospel. In this general view we apprehend it is applicable to us; and in this light we propose to illustrate its bearing on your temper and your life, after the holy communion.

How then, do you ask, do we bear about daily the dying of the Lord Jesus? We reply, in the first place, We should do so *by cherishing faith in a crucified Saviour*. Faith, you know, is the master-principle in the heart of the Christian; having a great influence over, exciting and modifying every thought, word, action, and feeling. The death of Christ the Son of God is the most wonderful

of all facts : indeed, it is so wonderful, that you never could have anticipated nor sought it ; and we should not be warranted to believe it unless it were authenticated to us by divine testimony. But it is not only the most wonderful, but it is the most *interesting* of all events. It is the foundation of all that is dear to man ; it is the ground of our pardon and our peace, of our hope and joy, of our present acceptance, and of our eternal salvation. It is the most interesting of all the facts that are recorded, not only in human narrative, but in the Book of God itself—not only in the history of our world, but, we may venture to say, in the annals of the universe itself. Nor is it only the most wonderful, and the most interesting, it is also the most *influential* of all facts. It spreads itself through the whole revelation and economy of God, and pervades the moral and spiritual government of the Most High. Accordingly you meet with it everywhere in the Word of the Living God : it is testified of by the law and by the prophets, by the evangelists and by the Apostles : it is the substance of the types, and the sum of the promises : it is the great accomplishment of the prophecies, and the glory of the oracles of heaven : it is that which fills the soul of the saint, and elevates his mind in glory ; it is that which renders every thing to him delightful and hopeful. You cannot wonder, then, that his faith should rest especially upon this great fact, and that he should cherish it. It is in the Book of God, the first, if not in point of order, yet of importance. “ I delivered to you,” says the Apostle, “ *first of all*, how that Christ died for our sins, and that afterwards he rose again according to the Scriptures.”

To cherish faith in this fact, then, is doubtless the first duty of man, and ought to be our great care. It is our hope, our privilege, our comfort, our joy. So the Apostle felt, and spake, and acted. He says, “ I am crucified with Christ, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Thus, by cherishing faith in this great fact, we become partakers of the fellowship of the Gospel ; thus we have the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ.

In the second place, we bear about always the dying of the Lord Jesus, *by a continual remembrance of this great event*. That which we believe most assuredly, which we revolve often, in which we feel the deepest interest, and to which we give the highest place, will be best remembered by us : and the death of Christ possessing all those requisites, with a good man, will impress itself deeply on his mind, and heart, and memory. We are, besides, so formed that facts affect the best minds more than fiction, because these facts realize our ideas, and give a body and evidence to our conceptions. Now, as nothing can be more true than the death of the Son of God, so nothing will be more delightfully remembered and deeply cherished than recollections of the death of Christ. The saints of God love to think about them, love to cherish the hope arising from them : and to help them in this great exercise is the most obvious design of the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper : for, you know, it is a commemorative ordinance, and in it Christ is eminently set forth to our view, so that the senses minister to the confirmation of our faith. To remind his hearers of this great event, and to excite their faith in him, is the grand purpose of every minister of the Gospel. He may say, as Peter said, “ I will endeavour that, during my

life and after my decease, you may have these things always in remembrance." And says Paul, in his first epistle to this very Church, "I declare unto you the death of the Lord Jesus, which, if ye keep in memory what I delivered to you, you shall be saved by him, and you shall rejoice in it, and through it, in hope of the glory of God."

Now, the death of Christ thus authenticated, and thus rendered interesting, fixes itself upon the mind and heart of the true Christian, and mingles itself with his best views: it touches his best feelings; it engages his best thoughts, and activities, and aspirations. Nor can we wonder at this. If we forget Jesus who died for us, whom and what, I pray you, shall we rationally and religiously remember? If we forget this great event, which is surrounded by so many attractions, and involves so many interests of the highest order, what facts and what events ought to please and can profit us? All other facts are defective, and without an interest in this, will become at last but as childish trifles, as worldly frivolities, as vain imaginations, as foolish expectations. Ought we not, then, to say, will not every right minded man be disposed to say, as David said concerning Jerusalem, "If I forget thee, O Jesus, let skill part from my right hand; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I forget thee, O Jesus?"

In the third place, we bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *by a progressive improvement of this great event*. The decease of our Lord is set forth to us in the Word of God, and in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, not merely for contemplation, but for admiring interest; not only for curious inquiry, but for deep meditation and practical improvement. It is this that is the life of man, and it is this that is the glory of God: and nothing can be well done, nothing can be spiritually enjoyed, without an interest in the decease of Christ. His death promotes all our interests; on it our every thing depends: our acceptance with God, our pardon, our peace, our hope, our comfort, our holiness, our eternal salvation, all spring from him, and all rest upon him. You may remember such declarations in the writings of our holy Apostle; "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God in our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." "He suffered without the gate, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood." Through him "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now, a good man is anxious to improve this death for all the purposes for which it was appointed of God, and endured by Christ. Others may gaze upon the cross; he glories in it: others may cast a passing glance upon the Divine Sufferer; he hangs upon the cross, he lives by the cross: he is ever casting his eye upon Him who for his sake endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high: he is ever looking to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world: he derives all the supplies of the divine life from this great and delightful object; according to the sublime language of our Lord himself in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to John: "Verily, verily," said the Saviour, in his own mystic, yet very intelligible language—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him

up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Fourthly, we ought to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *by imbibing more and more of his Spirit*. There are many persons who have neither spirit nor life for readings or discussions concerning this glorious event. It is possible, indeed, that they may submit with patience, or hear with a little pleasure, discourses concerning the outworks of Christianity, and even discussions concerning the death of Christ, provided these are conducted with taste, set off in happy phrases, and delivered in a graceful manner: but let the preacher strike home, let him speak of the peculiarities of religion, let him detect and expose the workings of the human heart, let him speak of the atrocious wickedness and corruption of humanity, let him rise to the peculiarities of experimental godliness and vital religion, and the person is offended; perhaps becomes disgusted.

But a good man will ever be anxious to drink deep into the spirit of the dying Saviour. And what was this spirit? It was a spirit of *holy love*; for "he loved us with an everlasting love," and thence "gave himself for us." It was a spirit of *holy submission* to the divine appointment: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God:" and he well knew all that that involved. It was a spirit of *determined decision* in his great work: yet he exclaimed, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" It was a spirit of *holy purity*. He was the Lamb of God, "without blemish and without spot." His judge pronounced him faultless: the Centurion who guarded his cross confessed that he was "a righteous man," that he was "the Son of God." It was a spirit of *invincible faith*. "*My God, my God,*" he cried, claiming an interest in him when the waters overwhelmed his soul. It was a spirit of *entire resignation to God* amid the agonies of death and the prospect of dying. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Now a good man bears about the dying of the Lord Jesus by seeking to drink continually into the spirit of the crucified Saviour, by imbibing it, by breathing it, by exemplifying it more and more. He desires to be actuated, like Christ, by a spirit of holy love, of sacred submission, of determined decision, of spotless purity, of invincible faith, and of entire resignation. On his death-bed he would say, putting forth his soul, breathing his pure aspirings after his God, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit. Into thy hands I commit myself, O thou Jehovah, God of truth: thou hast redeemed me."

In the fifth place, we shall not bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *unless through grace, we attempt a practical illustration of that great decease, of its character and of its power*. That it was the sole, or even the chief end of Christ's appearing in our world to set before us a perfect example of all goodness and piety, as some have contended, we do not believe, and are far from affirming; on the contrary, we are expressly told that he came to die for our sins; and we are informed by Christ himself, that he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. But although it was not the only, or even the main, end of his coming in the flesh to exhibit a sublime example of perfect morality, yet doubtless he came to present



to us a pattern of all goodness, and all godliness. Hence we are told that he hath "set us an example that we should follow his steps." And hence the Apostle Paul says, that he gave himself that we should imitate him, and "walk in love, as he also loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." "Forasmuch," says the Apostle Peter, "as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin: that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Now, it should be the object of the Christian, to exemplify continually this practical influence; he should endeavour to live under the power of the cross; and to show that the death of Christ is to him the wisdom and the power of God. And cherishing faith in Christ, and living in him, he will exemplify the influence of his cross; he will live and he will die as a Christian. It was the grand design of the death of Christ, practically considered in its ultimate influence on the Christian in this world, to make him like his Blessed Lord; and every good man will wish to be transformed more and more into every *trait* of the temper, and every characteristic of the conduct, of the Saviour; beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he will desire to be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Lord the Spirit: he will go from one degree of holiness to another, from one measure of conformity to another, until the likeness between him and Christ be perfected in glory. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory; we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

In the last place, we should bear about continually the dying of the Lord Jesus *by a frequent solemn commemoration of him*. This, as you know, was the manner of the Apostles and of Christians in the primitive times; they observed frequently the Lord's Supper. And every good man will delight to follow their example, and to show forth, as often as may be, the death of Christ until he come again. Nor can anything be more reasonable. The sacred institution has lost nothing of its ancient and simple dignity—nothing of its tender interest or its imperishable obligation: it is now just as simple, as significant, as solemn, as delightful, as refreshing, as consolatory, as edifying, and as improving, as ever it was. There is no ordinance of the New Testament on which God has smiled more frequently. If a child of God has been brought nearer to his Heavenly Father, it has been usually at the Lord's table; and at such a time as this he has been indeed brought into God's banquetting house, and the banner of love has been spread over him. Unquestionably the Lord's Supper, duly celebrated, is the most striking image that we have of the state and the service of the upper world. "I appoint to you," says our Saviour, referring to this circumstance—"I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom."

Surrounded, then, as the Lord's Supper is, with attractions the most powerful and persuasive, enforced by recommendations so high, what ought to be so influential? Every true child of God will delight to observe it; and it is doubtless not well with the person who either slights this duty, or declines positively to observe it. Think you that man can be a Christian whose soul

disrelishes the bread of life? Is that man likely to be a member of the family of God who absents himself, frequently or always, unnecessarily, from the table of the Lord, and who will not eat of the children's bread? A good man loves the habitations of God, and the place where his honour dwells: he loves to show forth the death of Christ till he come again: he rejoices in celebrating the Eucharist, the feast of joy and of praise: he delights to commemorate that great decease, the most wonderful event on which the sun ever shone, and to hand it down to succeeding generations. While he celebrates this death, he knows that he is joining the blessed in the better world, who with him are ever ready to exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive riches, and honour, and glory, and power, and dominion. To Him that loved us and washed us in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God, to Him be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

Such we apprehend, summarily, is the manner in which all, in these latter times, may bear about, spiritually and effectually, the dying of the Lord Jesus. Thus will Christians act.

But what shall we say to those who have no heart for this work, and who have no enjoyment in the Saviour's death? What shall we say to those who will not bear about this dying, and who dishonour the worthy name by which they are called? What shall we say to those who, when the minister of the Gospel proclaims to them the cross of Christ, are ready to say to him, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee:" or who, when the minister of religion invites them to the Lord's table, and urges the partaking of this heavenly repast, seem to say, "The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible?"

Especially what can we say to them who wound Jesus in the house of his friends, who crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame; concerning whom we may say, with weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things? Can we praise them for this? Nay, we must condemn them. Reason condemns them; consistency condemns them: and it is impossible to measure the atrocious character, and the delinquency of such conduct and dishonour on the Christian name.

Yet, astonishing to say, such a sinner is not excluded from the hope of mercy through the dying Saviour. Nay, that very blood that is trampled on, has been shed for the remission of the sins of such: that very death which is despised, were it embraced by faith, would ensure your best interests; and that Saviour whom you scorn, would work out for you a right to eternal happiness. Oh then, while it is yet the season, listen to the voice of God: "Turn ye, turn ye: why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "As the Lord liveth," said Jehovah, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he may turn unto me and live." "Hearken to me," says Christ himself, "ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry." Yes, brethren, it is a faithful saying (may the Spirit of God enable us all to hear it!) "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners."

On the other side it is incumbent on us to declare, that, if you will not hear, you cannot be established ; if you will not hear, you cannot be saved ; if you will not believe, you must perish in your sins. Nor is this, we fear, a very uncommon case. “ I saw,” says Solomon, “ the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done.” We would hope, however, better of many amongst you ; fain would we say of *all* amongst you. Come, then, and let us endeavour by grace to bear about daily the dying of the Lord Jesus. Thus shall we exemplify the Christian life and the Christian name : thus shall we have the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, and become conformable to his death : thus shall we breathe the spirit and imitate the example of the best of men, who loved this festival and are now in glory : and thus, as we pass along this vale of tears, the recollection of the sufferings of Christ will soften our every affliction, and heighten our every enjoyment ; and after this vain world hath passed away, we shall feel the delightful assurance, that if we have suffered with Christ now, we shall be glorified together with him hereafter, for ever and for ever

## THE APOSTACY OF JUDAS.

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HON. AND REV. E. W. NOEL, A.M.

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, AUGUST 17, 1834.

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When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him."—JOHN, xiii. 21—27.

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THIS was the last of a series of fatal victories which Judas Iscariot won over the different means and checks, which God had mercifully provided to withhold him from sin, and bring him to piety. From that time it seemed as if God would no more strive with him, either by his providence of love, or by the suggestions of his Spirit within. We read, that "Satan entered into him." He seems at this moment to have taken full possession of that miserable being, and thenceforth he was no more released from his grasp. It seemed as if now that awful sentence was pronounced upon Judas, "Let him alone." There was no more check to his iniquity; and he proceeded rapidly in that downward course, which was to issue in his irremediable destruction.

But we must not think, brethren, that Judas came to this degree of guilt and sin at once. Many were the checks that God had mercifully interposed. Many were the mighty means of grace which he had resisted. In this passage we read of the last of those means. Let us consider that series of the means of grace which Judas had resisted before he triumphed over this.

*Judas had been acquainted with all the remarkable miracles that Jesus Christ had wrought to manifest the truth of his mission.* He had been with the other disciples on the midnight lake, when he saw Jesus walking on the waters as a spirit. He had seen by what power he had sustained Peter, when he walked, likewise, on the waves. With what mighty power Jesus Christ hushed the stormy element, and at his words the winds lie still. He saw him enter the vessel, and then with a mysterious guidance conducted it to the destined port, without human aid. He had likewise joined with the other disciples in distributing the bread, which multiplied in the hands of the five thousand who were seated on the shore of the lake. He had witnessed the dead come forth from the cavern, and mingle again with living men. He had heard the voice of that demon which came from within the men, who entreated the Lord Jesus not to torment them before the time. And if he had not himself stood upon



the mountain at the time of the transfiguration, he had heard from those, whose testimony was never to be questioned, of the marvellous light which sparkled and glittered as the sun, like the body of our Saviour in the midnight air. He had heard from those whose veracity was not to be doubted, of the voice which came from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son." So that he knew all. He knew that it was Emanuel, the Messiah, whom God had sent to rescue mankind from misery. He knew it was he of whom the prophets had spoken; and he whom John the Baptist had introduced to the nation. God had granted to him the fullest evidence for the authority of our Saviour; which ought to have made him reverence that authority, and observe his laws.

And then, *what instruction had Judas received from his Master*; what an inestimable blessing was it to be under the immediate instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ! He doubtless opened to them, from day to day, the meaning of the Scriptures before him; and led them to examine those Scriptures with which they were unacquainted. He expounded to them many important truths which were before misunderstood. The instruction of our Lord, ought to have led Judas to do all his immediate duties. If there was any thing that they were not prepared to learn, he reserved it for the fuller instruction which he was shortly to bestow. Still, all that was necessary to guide them to their immediate duties, to deter them from sin, to animate them to acts of piety, did our Saviour doubtless communicate. Indeed, he intimates this, when he said to his disciples shortly afterwards, at the sixteenth chapter of St. John, "These things"—that is, the coming sufferings—"have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you." He was with them, to animate, to instruct, to console, to deter them from sin, and detect their failings;—to shew them their true character, and lead them to all the duties of the station to which they were called. All these advantages Judas enjoyed.

Then this instruction was sustained by *an example of unparalleled loveliness*. Judas saw, from day to day, the perfect character of his blessed Master. He saw that holy being in the midst of an unholy nation: he must have observed his fidelity, and that he never shrunk from his duty; the boldness also with which he fearlessly rebuked sin, and yet mingled his boldness with benevolence; that patience which no provocation could exhaust, and that gentleness and meekness which no insults could ever change. He saw his perfect holiness; which was so much more beautiful than in him who was called Adam: because he manifested, for instance, every thing that attracted him to God, and Christ manifested every thing that directed the mind to God. He saw an example at once venerable and endearing. We all know the power of example: such singular power and force has it upon our minds, that we might have spurned every thing mean and sinful away; and the grace of St. Paul or St. John, would seem to be at once possible and easy of attainment. Judas was the last man that ought not to have been unacquainted with the depravity of the human heart, and that it can resist any means, however conducive to our good.

Besides the example of Christ, he was favoured with *constant tokens of kindness*. This, indeed, was manifested to all who were around him: but Judas was one of his *chosen* friends, *one who was continually* receiving from him the

testimony of his goodness in his daily intercourse : so that not a day, not an hour elapsed, in which his master did not give him proofs of his extreme gentleness and goodness, towards one so unworthy, and yet professing to be his disciple. We know the power that kindness has over the natural affections, and how frequently God makes use of the natural affections, as the first means that he employs to draw careless sinners to thoughts about eternity. Such kindness as that of Christ, when in combination with so much wisdom, ought to have made him endearing ; we should have thought that it would have laid hold of the affections of Judas in a way that no power could resist ; and that it would have made him wish to become a devoted servant of Christ ; if it had been only to please one, who had been so gracious to him, and who wished so much for his improvement.

Being brought in connexion with Jesus Christ, must necessarily have induced him *to employ himself frequently in the various religious exercises that would promote his Christian temper and character.* There cannot be a question but that Judas, together with the other disciples, were directed by Christ, and would listen to his direction, to search the Scriptures with frequency and assiduity. We cannot doubt but that they would often converse together about those points which arrested their minds in the Old Testament, and which were difficult of comprehension. There cannot be a question but that they were directed by our Lord often to engage in social prayer : nay not unfrequently was he himself led to devotion. And I would fervently entreat every one who is devoted to the will of God, that he would manifest it in prayer. Besides this, his duties as an Apostle, would lead him continually to religious exercises. He would exhort sinners to repent ; preach to them the love of Christ ; tell them of the heaven that awaited the children of God, and of the hell into which his enemies would be cast down. He must of necessity have been engaged frequently, and long together, in those duties which were imposed upon him by his office ; which were to draw men to that which he so little experienced himself. Besides the responsibility of his office and the powerful means of grace, he would feel continually, that the office to which he was called, to be executed aright, his heart must be deeply engaged in the work. He must constantly feel this as a stimulus to seek after, not only the possession of grace, but the possession of *more* grace, that he might discharge it with effect. For what man, however unconverted, would live and waste his time without labour ? Therefore if he desire to discharge it effectually, he must discharge it with sincerity and truth.

Besides this, we may add other powerful means which God, in his mercy, had granted to Judas. *He was continually associating with the best people upon earth ;* thus, whatever defect or change there may have been in the disciples of Jesus Christ (of whom certainly he was far inferior by what he afterwards became), Christ could still say, in the fifteenth chapter of this Gospel, “ Now are ye clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you : ” that is, he assisted them in their office, to support and prune each of the branches on the living vine that had superfluous twigs, to free each religious character of those prejudices and habits, which interfered with the progress of holiness, and bearing much fruit in the service of God. This he had already accomplished for them ; he had removed the prejudices which attracted their hearts, and they

were now prepared to bring forth much fruit unto holiness. Judas was not unacquainted with this ; he had heard of the unaffected proofs of attachment from his Master ; he was a witness of the influence the divine truth had upon their minds : he could see the progress of religion in their hearts ; though one of the fatal effects of hypocrisy is, that it makes the hypocrite suspect others to be the same ; for we all judge of others by ourselves. Yet still, with all this, Judas would not have been one whose belief was insincere, had he attended to it ; for he must necessarily have seen the tokens of affection he received in the service of Christ, and with a sensitiveness of conscience he would have discharged his duty. He must have seen how possible it was to be religious ; and how beautiful a religious character became.

It seems that those who followed Christ, saw *the remarkable change perfected by the means of grace, and rendered effectual by grace itself.* They saw the joy and gratitude of the Syrophenician woman, whose strength of faith brought her great blessings. They had heard the confession of the blind man—they had witnessed the change in the heart of the publican—they had seen the penitence of Mary Magdalene ; they perceived that all these became devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. Thus, towards the close of his affecting career, the means of grace seemed to gain more powerfully upon the heart. Could the poor have had a Saviour who was so anxious, and solicitous for their well being, so dear, so kind, and yet uninfluenced in his examples of kindness ?

Still more, how was it possible for Judas to have endured that scene, *when the Lord Jesus, forgetting and overcoming his own grief and care, occupied himself so much with those sorrows of his disciples which were much less than his, in order to instruct them in that humility and brotherly kindness which he felt essential for his service afterwards ?* We read that he knelt down and washed his disciples' feet. How could Judas bear to see that blessed person whose miracles he had witnessed—who had lately entered Jerusalem in triumph, while the multitude shouted Hosannah !—who with such authority silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, and rebuked their hypocrisy—how could he see Jesus kneel down to wash his feet, and look him in the face, while he meditated that awful crime. Why should not the crimson blushes on the cheek of Judas have forced contrition to his heart, and brought tears to his eyes, that he might, at some time, have wept in anguish, though never yet in penitence ? How could he maintain that unflinching hardihood of purpose in the midst of such appeals to every feeling that remained in him ?

Still more, as the context tells us, and as we read in Luke, xxii. *he was called to the table of the Lord, at the first institution of the Supper :* and that he sat down with the other twelve, and joined in eating of the Paschal Lamb—that affecting type of our Saviour's sufferings, and the redemption of the world from a worse than Egyptian bondage. And after supper he heard him say, as he broke the bread, " This is my body which is given for you," and as he took the cup, " This is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for you, and for the remission of sins : " How could he have marked that patience, holiness, benevolence, fortitude, and unparalleled compassion, which was manifested in our Saviour's actions to them ; when he foresaw his sufferings, and yet would not shrink from them ; when our Saviour announced that he suffered voluntarily

not by compulsion; and that he endured all for *their* sake? Judas heard all this: he knew that he himself would be the essential instrument to accomplish his murder; he heard the words of our Saviour when he was about to die, and yet he retained his purpose, to lead those who should apprehend him.

Thus, brethren, all the most powerful means that imagination could devise, failed in repressing the sin of Judas, when once it had obtained the mastery; as we have all seen. The miracles which he witnessed; the instruction he received; the examples of our Lord Jesus; the religious exercises in which he was constantly engaged; the responsibility of the office which he undertook; the companionship of those excellent men, together with our Saviour's knowledge of the human heart made known to him, his lessons of brotherly kindness, and the way in which he foreshewed the sufferings which he was about to endure for man—all failed to reach the obduracy of Judas, or to change his fixed purpose of iniquity.

Perhaps, brethren, when we are noticing the strength of sin in him, which overcame all the most powerful means of grace, there may be some here who are ready to suppose that Judas was one selected above all others, to manifest the power of depravity; one who should not be quoted as an example of the power of sin, but as standing out in singular contrast from the good qualities that exist in his fellow creatures, by not receiving such powerful means of grace. It may be that he was scarred by a *peculiar* curse, and destined to a peculiar damnation. That he was selected as one whose energy of evil marked him above all for the contempt of his fellow men. And who is it that is thus prompt and ready to condemn Judas? Who is the person that is not *as singular* an instance of depravity? Are not you, my dear hearers, now under the power of a reigning sin, you that thus condemn this wretched man? Your condemnation cannot be too emphatic; I could not select terms too strong to shew the wickedness of your obdurate hearts, thus to resist the goodness and patience of Christ. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest dost the same things." Who are you that can say truly, that you have never manifested such obduracy of heart as Judas did? Perhaps you may not have manifested it *yet*, but you follow your sins, and you are now under the power of a reigning sin. I ask you to determine the question as before God, whether you have not resisted and triumphed over means of grace as mighty as he overcame. The miracles of Christ, if not wrought before your eyes, ought, to a reasonable creature, to have the same effect, because they are handed down to you with a force of evidence you could not reject. You have seen the remarkable wonders which followed his ascension, and which have sealed the truth of the Gospel. If you have not seen him from day to day exhibiting the splendour of his perfect character before your eyes, you have seen more than Judas did, because you know of his ascension into heaven. When you ponder the facts of his narrative upon earth, you know that His was a life, not only of a perfect and sinless man, but it was a life inclined to the will of God. You have had opportunities of marking, more than he did, the condescending goodness of the Lord Jesus. So that if you have not had his personal instruction, you have had that which is of more importance—the teaching of the Holy Ghost; if you have not had the instruction which he



gave to Judas, you have had instruction from the perfect canon of God's word ; that fuller knowledge which, under an inspired Spirit, the Apostle conveyed to the Church. He has left us ignorant of no important truth, no real duty : line after line, precept after precept, of the blessed book, coming with God's authority, coming, as it were, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, ought to be dear to our hearts. You have had opportunities of witnessing a considerable increase of true religion, conversion after conversion, which change of example render no longer questionable ; so that, by the power of true religion on the lives of eminent Christians, we may comparatively pronounce them blameless. Judas had the same opportunities as you have had of witnessing peculiar instances of it before your eyes. You ought to impress upon your own families, and those near and dear to you, the power of true religious principle ; and you are no longer at liberty to neglect it, because you can no longer deny it. You have probably been led by your conscience to engage in the different religious exercises, perhaps with much assiduity : these, joined with social prayer, are calculated to stamp a new character, new directions for our thoughts, new habits in our lives, that will carry us on our way to heaven. Besides this we know, or we ought to know, that he is an omniscient witness of every step we take, and every thought that is lodged in our minds, and that he is more loving and gracious to us than he ever seemed to Judas.

By this we learn the power of sin, and the mighty means of grace which have been used to overcome it. It tells us, or it ought to teach each conscience, that the Son of man came to seek and to save that sheep which was wandering and lost. It tells us, in other words, it tells every one here, in language which I trust the Almighty will never suffer to be eradicated from our memories, which no evidence, however complete—no instruction, however clear or forcible—no example of living worth, no kindness of Christian friends, no religious exercises, however multiplied, no invitations of mercy, no warning truths, no convictions of resolution, are able to dethrone our reigning sin ; sin which is triumphing over all, and which will leave the sinner under the hopeless dominion and tyranny of Satan, till a mightier arm than our own shall pluck us out of the dreadful abyss. Oh that God Almighty may teach every sinner this one lesson.

But why is it that I should use these poor words, to induce you to recognize the power of sin, when, alas, you have already resisted so many more powerful means than those which I am now endeavouring to employ to save you ? Have you not seen, do you not know, that sin is of such power, that it will induce the sinner over whom it reigns to violate every obligation, disregard every instruction, shut out the voice of reason, and defy the menace of Jehovah himself ? There is that kind of omnipotence in sin, that no external force shall subdue. There is no sinner but what knows its destruction : it chains him down to the earth, and destroys his soul for heaven. Sin has plucked angels from their thrones in heaven, and expelled man from Paradise ; it has filled hell with damned spirits ; and yet it is pursuing the same unconquerable way, destroying tens of thousands ; and yet, though you know this, you will not listen to the salvation of the Son of God.

Why should I speak, my beloved friends ? Alas ! it is in vain ; it is another proof, added to the many, of the power of transgression, and of my weak efforts, that are wasted on your obdurate hearts. It will prove that my sermon to-day

is another sword broken, which could not touch the granite of your hearts; another wave that has rolled over the mass of ice, which it could not melt, but which has freezed as it passed over. It will leave your hearts untouched, and your souls still under the dominion of sin; so that you will go and forget all that you ought to remember, and cherish that which you ought to detest and disregard. Yet you may not all do so; there are moments of thoughtfulness in most men's lives. Our transient desires are sometimes thought upon, but these thoughts come so seldom. The desires after a better state are so bounded and stunted in the sinner; he thinks, "Oh! could I but escape from the chains that bind me, I might see the constraining loveliness of the Lord Jesus, which would attract even my withered heart." Once let him have habits of piety, and that might be easy of attainment which he now declares to be impossible.

Are there any here who know that they are under the power of a reigning sin? If there are, then you are prepared, for at least one half hour (though perhaps your preparations are so bound) to consider those salutary reflections which such a subject suggests. And if any of those whom I address, feel, for one moment, that it is so, that they have resisted the powerful means of grace offered them, in that one moment of salutary sorrow, my beloved brethren, let me entreat you, in God's presence, to attend to the reflections which I now propose. In the first place, let me observe that *you have witnessed your sin*; however trifling it may seem in your own sight, it serves to mark the unspeakable guilt of your alienation from God. However little your sin may appear to be, does it not mark this—that you habitually indulge it, and systematically set yourselves against God's authority, and do that which he forbids; that you would not regard his authority? that you have felt the frightful consequences which are the result of unconquered sin, and you would not strive to overcome it? No glory of the eternal world can have any power to attract you; and although the eternal world seems to excite your fears (for it does indeed sometimes excite them), yet it is not enough to deter you from the love of sin. What an extraordinary energy of evil must there be in the heart of man to resist all the motives which the Gospel brings to bear upon the heart, to bid it to forsake sin! If it be but a *little sin*, why not give up that little sin? Does not the authority of God—does not the glory of heaven—does not the pains and trials of hell—seem enough to wean you from that little thing upon which you most set your hearts? You cling to what is despicable, choose what is little, and disregard all that is great; so that you are utterly alienated from all that is lovely, and worthy to have your affections attracted to it; you fasten yourself down to something that is base, from which, if you were once separated, you would look upon it with contempt. Let this mark your guilt, my beloved friends, and see if sin does reign unsubdued and unchecked within you. Whatever your sin is, it marks your total alienation of heart from that God whom you ought to love as angels love. Why, the divine perfections ought to draw forth the kindling and ever burning affection of the heart. If you love him not at all, then is there an interval between you and Christians, as wide as between heaven and hell.

Let the reigning sin mark your guilt; and then, in the second place, *consider your need of a Saviour*. Unless you are washed from that guilt by the atoning blood of Christ, how can you be washed at all? You must, brethren, forego

for ever every lust ; you must be convinced of the sin which has maintained dominion over you ; you must forego for ever all claims upon the divine justice ; you must cast yourself upon the divine mercy, and seek to be washed by the atoning blood of Christ, to take away your guilt. You must see that you have need of nothing else than the divine grace, to make the means more effectual. Never again reckon upon means : it is that by which you cheat your heart, to suppose that a happier moment will arrive. Whence are these means to come ? How shall you prove them to us ? What are they ? Who gets them ? Brethren, it is an illusion of the heart : that heart which is deceitful above all things, which is desperately wicked ; there are no more powerful means than there are at present, and that happier moment will never arrive. *Now* is the accepted time ; it is through the grace of God, not multiplying *new* means, but rendering effectual those which we still enjoy.

Again ; let such a subject bring this solemn truth before you ; that *you need instant repentance* ; and you must not be a single day or hour without that repentance. Now tell me, brethren, if you are immortal, if your souls, which you wish to live on for ever and ever, are immortal ; if you are rational creatures, tell me what grounds you have for supposing that if you cannot repent now, you ever can ? What grounds can a reasonable man have to lead him to this persuasion ? You cannot repent *now*, you say : you cannot hate the sin which has dominion over you : believe me, if you do not burst from its dominion *now*, you *never* can. You want instant repentance to take one step towards heaven. Now, at this moment, and in the presence of God, I tell you to forsake it for ever ; and heartily, with a true sincerity, beg of God that every reigning sin may be dragged from your soul, and that God Almighty alone may reign over your hearts. If your resolution is timid, if your desire is so feeble, and you know that it is so timid and so feeble, then ask his grace, as you can ask, and entreat him to free you, so that sin shall never again prevail, which has now so nearly accomplished your destruction. Now I entreat you, if you would not live to regret a wasteful hour, an hour of sensitiveness of conscience, an hour in which you have had one glimpse of hope, and do not wish to lose it at that moment when you might seem to have your course to heaven marked ; and you would not take the first step to enter it, though you sit here in the presence of God, and lift up your hearts to God's abode—let me entreat you to overcome that sin which has dominion over you, or it will be the cause of your eternal ruin.

One thing more suggests itself. If ever you are overcome by sin, and feel that your mind is occupying your heart, consider that there are evil things that may be taken to heart. In the case of Judas ; so long as he was occupied in the consideration of that love for the thirty pieces of silver, all love for his Master had entirely ceased ; he was continually thinking of the pleasure of obtaining the money, and he could not prevent his mind from recurring to it. If Judas had gone at once and confessed his sin to the Lord ; if he had at once renounced his office, through the temptation which he felt to be insuperable ; or if he had been occupied with the duties of his calling, and busily engaged in the preparation of his ministry, and in the discharge of it ; then his mind would have been continually—associating with the other disciples who were occupied—his mind would have been employed and occupied aright by the impression

of his heart, so that we can say his sin would have been checked. Now, if the heart was occupied with right objects instead of evil, it would have taught you, my beloved friends, to feel that you are now under the power of a reigning sin : and you would set yourselves to right employments and occupy yourselves in useful reading.

Above all, choose companions who will elevate, improve, and sanctify you. In the light and ordinary employments of life we may engage ; they are useful, so long as persons do not give themselves too heartily to them—for indolence is the great bane of character, and they who give themselves to this can have no religion about them. Employment will strengthen the character, and lessen the power of evil in those objects which are pursued. There is a precept that every one is commanded to obey—that he be fully occupied. Then let him who is anxious to turn his mind from any reigning temptation, let him set himself to benevolent objects in life ; they cannot be entered upon without attracting the heart and engaging the thoughts. Let them endeavour to do good : let them at once strive to draw others from the misery of sin ; and encourage those godly efforts which are now so plentiful in the world, by which the cause of the Redeemer may be advanced ; and thus sin will be checked as we insensibly acquire a deeper interest in those things. Let the love of good expel the love of evil. Every one ought to seek pleasure and improvement for the mind, by reading. I need not say how the sacred volume opens to the religious man endless means for his improvement and employment. I may add, likewise, that works which are not upon religious subjects, but that convey useful knowledge, are well adapted to arrest the imagination, take hold of the heart, and bring the thoughts to a totally new current, under the sanctifying influence of God's Spirit, and the powerful means of grace.

Thus the most powerful means are under our command. But good companions are of incalculable value : they fasten our hearts to friends whose example we venerate ; and our affections are attracted by all that is excellent and good. Judas never ought to have been alone : he ought to have been kept by the side of his Master, and not have left the disciples perpetually. Judas, in his absence from them, reflected upon those evils which haunted his imagination : but he ought to have been diverted from them, and then he would not have been left to plan and regulate the different means for the accomplishment of the crimes which he intended to commit. So ought every person who finds himself under the power of a reigning sin. They ought to be surrounded at home by those whose excellent conversation, heavenly-mindedness, pious sincerity in the ways of God, and provident counsels—whose holy example would warm the affections, and continually draw us to what is good. Beloved friends, this is what you ought to acquire, if you would not now come under the hopeless dominion of sin ; and I do beseech you that sit here this day, to lift up your hearts to God, and to set yourselves to use the means by which you may overcome sin.

Lastly, let me tell you, it is not in checking *one* sin that will avail to your eternal happiness. Each of us here who are under the power of a reigning sin, proves the fact, that he is no servant of God. His nature must be changed : he must seek the grace of God ; that shall make him a new creature ; that Christ Jesus may visit him with the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ; that he



may be brought into conformity with the image of our Saviour. He must begin the life eternal; religious principles must govern, not only one habit, but all. He must set his mind upon heaven, and invite others to aspire after it. It is by this, and this only, that he has a safe evidence that he is one of God's servants, one of Christ's chosen ones: and that he will meet his Master with joy at that great day when he shall again appear. He must seek his blessing too; and oh! that there may be no religious person in this assembly, who will not now go from this Church with the first resolution he ever made in his life strengthened—no longer to live for himself, but, by God's blessing and aid, to lead a religious life, and live always under the dominion of a religious principle.

## THE MAGNITUDE OF THE MISSIONARY WORK.

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REV. D. WILSON, A.M.

ST. MARY, ISLINGTON, SEPTEMBER 14, 1834\*.

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"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."—MATTHEW, ix. 37, 38.

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OUR blessed Lord takes a delight in comparing the operations of grace with those of nature. The mind of man easily reverts from the one to the other; and even more readily listens to spiritual and heavenly instructions, when they are conveyed to him through the medium of objects which are constantly presented to the outward senses. We may suppose our blessed Saviour to have been in no little degree an admirer of those works of creation, of which he was equally the Author with those of grace. Both indeed had been marred and spoiled by the fall; both bespoke the entrance of sin and corruption. Whether he looked upon the face of nature—his own handy-work, or whether he regarded the moral condition of his creatures, he found the same corresponding marks of disorder and derangement. But the same gracious and all-powerful word could restore and bless both the one and the other. He who could crown the year with his goodness, and make his paths to drop fatness, so that the pastures should be clothed with flocks, and the valleys be covered over with corn, could also, by the same Almighty power, cause righteousness and peace to spring forth together; he could make the moral wilderness to rejoice; and he could make the spiritual desert to blossom like the rose. The object of his coming into the world was to do this; he came to renovate and restore the moral wilderness; he came to gather in the rich harvest of immortal souls into the heavenly garner.

The sight of the multitude who were walking with him at this moment, waiting to be healed of their bodily diseases, seems to have brought to his mind that glorious era which was now bursting upon the world, when the present waving crop of nature's harvest, whitening and shaking before his eyes, should be only a very weak and imperfect illustration of that great ingathering of souls which should take place, when, as the Psalmist says, "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth."

The Church Missionary Society, the cause of which I am to plead before you this afternoon, has for its object the promotion and carrying on of this great design—to send out into distant lands, missionaries, catechists, and school-masters, to carry forth the words of divine life to those far-distant regions

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\* On behalf of the Church Missionary Society.

which are sitting in darkness, and without light. Or, in other words, their object is precisely this: to send out more labourers, to reap and gather in the heavenly harvest of the world. Taking, then, our text as the foundation of the remarks which I shall make, let us look, in the first place, at the vast field of labour which invites missionary effort in the present day. Secondly, the comparatively small number of those who are as yet engaged in this great work. And, lastly, notice by what means we may best contribute to supply this deficiency. And may the Lord of the harvest be now present; may he bless and sanctify what I may be permitted to speak as his feeble instrument; and may your hearts, my beloved brethren, be aroused, and kindled, and awakened on this great subject.

Let me first direct you to fix your eyes on THAT VAST FIELD OF MISSIONARY LABOURS WHICH THE WORLD PRESENTS. "The harvest truly is plenteous." Even in our blessed Lord's time, at the very first establishment of a Christian church, the opening of a brighter day was beginning to dawn; the fields were already white for the harvest. Looking through the vista of time, and surveying, with a divine glance, that very enlargement of his church, he already saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. The first drops, as it were, of the heavenly shower, were already falling; the womb of time was pregnant with the rich and abundant fruit. If such were the circumstances of the world at that time, the present moment must present an aspect still more encouraging and more striking. Would you know, my brethren, how plenteous this harvest is? Look first at those vast tracks in the present day which are forming in the immediate sphere of our missionary labours. Lift up the eye, that is, Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward, and see on every hand, stretching before you, the sphere of missionary labours. On the one hand are the West India Islands, and the numerous Islands of the Atlantic on the West, stretching forth their hands for our Gospel. The slave, just bursting the bands of despotic tyranny, now is beginning to think, and feel, and act for himself, and is looking for the Christian missionary to instruct him in that better liberty, wherewith God makes his people free. Then the Red River Settlements, on the North shores of America; Greenland, with her icy coasts, and the wild savages of the Northern, are beginning to hear the name of Christ, and softening their ice-bound hearts beneath the genial influences of the Sun of Righteousness. Then on the South, there are the sable sons of Africa calling for help; vast tribes of newly discovered territories are waiting for us. The Western territory of Sierra Leone, needing much strengthening with missionary hands; and presenting a most encouraging, though in some respects difficult, sphere of labour. Need I turn your eyes Eastward, and tell you, that India, with her hundred millions, is lying open to the entrance of the Christian missionary, and is flocking to the standard of the cross? Or that Australasia, with her almost countless islands, the aggregate surface of which is supposed to exceed the whole of that of Europe, are now forming in some of their quarters one of the most interesting and encouraging spheres of our missionary effort? Yes, my brethren, the harvest is plenteous; stretching on every hand; waving with a rich crop of corn, ready to be gathered by the hand of the Christian missionary.

How large, again, is that blessing which has been already granted to this and kindred Missionary Societies. For there is a shaking amongst the nations ; there is an inquiry on foot. At the present moment the Church Missionary Society has not less than eighty-four ordained missionaries ; about five hundred and fifty lay assistants ; four hundred schools, and about eighteen thousand scholars, in her nine different missions ; all active and united in carrying on this great cause. The harvest is plenteous ; souls are ripening ; converts are being added to the cross. The idolater of the East foretels, and is compelled to confess, that his false idols must fall, must yield, and give way beneath the triumphs of the cross. The New Zealander of the South is quitting his fierce and savage barbarisms, and flocking to the house of God, to hear of Him who is the Prince of Peace ; his war hatchet is dropped ; or it is turned into the church-going bell, to summon the assembly in the wild neighbourhood to the temple of their God. The sword is already turned into the plough-share, the spear into the pruning-hook.

The harvest, lastly, is plenteous, if we consider how vast, how extensive, are those promises of the divine word, the fulfilment of which we are now looking for. For we look beyond the present opening prospect, however encouraging, and however hopeful ; and we are anticipating, in faith, the glorious issue and consummation of Messiah's kingdom ; when not merely some bright specks, as it were, of vegetation shall chequer the wild face of nature, but when *the whole world* of nature shall crowd to the throne of grace ; when the light shall break forth in its *full* effulgence from beneath the darkening clouds, and *all* hearts united, and *all* souls converted, and all from the East, and the West, and the North, and the South, shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of our God.

But, Secondly, while the harvest is thus plenteous, we have a sad reverse to feel in THE COMPARATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF LABOURERS WHO ARE OCCUPIED IN GATHERING. Well might our blessed Lord be impressed with this truth : the whole world, when he uttered the language of my text, stretched out before him, in the distant prospect, as the future sphere of his spiritual conquests. The heathen had been long given him as his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth as his possession : but at present what was his prospect ? Twelve humble fishermen were all that he could call his Christian church : twelve poor men, taken from the lowest stations of life, were all whom he could claim as his devoted and steady followers. The whole expanse of creation lay before him, a wild uncultivated waste, with hardly one bright speck to vary the moral darkness which was gathering around. Since that time, since this first day-break, as it were, the spread of Messiah's kingdom has been astonishingly great : but the lamentation before us is still not inapplicable ; the labourers, my brethren, are still few. The great bulk of mankind are occupied with their earthly callings ; the fruits of this world are eagerly and diligently gathered : but the heavenly vineyard still lies neglected ; few care to reap the harvest of immortal souls. We bless God, indeed, that a missionary spirit has been stirred up in this our land ; and that one and another is responding to the call, and replying, "Here am I, send me." But still the labourers are few when compared with the mighty and grand work which is to be done. What, my



brethren, is this work? What is it that the humble missionary undertakes to effect? He goes forth to produce, under the divine blessing, a moral renovation throughout the world; to repair the ruin of the fall; to shed a ray of heavenly light, where gloom and darkness are pervading: immortal souls are the fruit which he reaps; wherever men exist, there is the sphere of his labours. Estimate, if you can, the value of the soul; the value of one immortal undying soul; and then tell me what is that vast and mighty work, when compared with the small and insignificant number of labourers employed?

Again, the labourers are few, if we consider how glorious and honourable is that office which they have undertaken. What post is so distinguished, what post is so honourable, as that of the Christian missionary? What honour so great as that of being employed as an ambassador of heaven, as the herald of divine love, as the agent of the King of kings? Does the earthly ambassador consider that he is holding an office of distinction, when he goes forth to a distant land, and represents some powerful monarch at a foreign court; and shall not the office of ambassador of the King of kings be eagerly sought, as one of distinguished honour? When we consider that he is commissioned to proclaim, and in a world of rebels, the glorious tidings of mercy and reconciliation in Christ, surely this office has not the value in the eyes of men, which its merit deserves. So far from there being that throng of eager applicants which we might expect to find crowding into this post of honour; so far, I say, from this being the case, we have to lament that one of the strongest appeals which this Society is called upon to make, is for more labourers. Our noble Missionary College, standing in this parish, has, I believe, never since its commencement been any thing like fully and completely occupied by students. And why is this? Alas, there is an apathy, an indifference, an unconcern prevails. We will rather contribute our money than our personal services, in this great work. We send forth our sons, yea far off, to distant India; and we care not for unhealthy climes when earthly emolument is to be sought: we send them forth to amass their fortunes, and to contribute to the ends of earthly enterprise: are we equally anxious that they should go forth with the pearl of great price in their hands; not to gather in something of this world's talents, but to store up the wealth of heavenly riches, which no moth could corrupt, and no thief could steal?

Then, how few are the labourers, when compared with the pressing wants of our own immediate sphere of missionary labours, connected with the Church Missionary Society. Leaving out of the question those vast tracks of the world where missionaries have never penetrated—the immediate stations of our own society are far too scantily occupied. Take, for example, the vast region of Australasia, and the islands in the immense Pacific Ocean: I find that only six ordained missionaries are labouring in those widely extended, and most interesting regions. In the West Indies, where eight hundred thousand of our fellow-subjects have just been liberated from the shackles of slavery, one solitary missionary from this society is residing. On the western coast of Africa we have five; on the shores of the Mediterranean we have eight; at Ceylon we have eight; and throughout the immense Peninsula of India we have twenty-four. Now what, I ask, is this? What proportion does this scanty band of labourers bear to the actual wants of these vast and desert regions?

Taking for granted that other kindred societies may be labouring in some of these parts with equal, or with even greater efficiency than our own, still the labourers are few. Unhealthy climes are impairing their strength, and rapidly thinning their numbers. We have continual information of one and another that have been cut off in the midst of their career, or of others whose feeble health, or exhausted frames, compel them to return to their native shores. Then the want of civilization, in many of these countries, much impedes the direct missionary duty. A thousand obstacles are presented; England is not half, my brethren, awake—not half alive to the spiritual wants, even of those quarters of the globe with which we are best acquainted.

But, lastly, we have to inquire, **HOW ARE THESE WANTS TO BE SUPPLIED?** Our Lord suggests the first grand remedy that we must adopt. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” *Prayer* is the grand resource for promoting the spread of the Gospel. When our Lord was about to appoint his twelve Apostles to go forth to preach his word, he spent the whole previous night in prayer to God. It was when the Apostles were assembled for devotion, that the first descent of the Holy Ghost took place. The Apostles and early preachers of the Gospel, ever mingled their public ministrations with fervent reiterated prayer for success. We find St. Paul daily remembering, at the throne of grace, those churches among which he was labouring; or, even when he had only heard of their faith, and had not a personal knowledge of them. It is the same in every age; it is not merely your contributions of money, my brethren, however needful and absolutely indispensable those contributions are, for God works by means, and he only gives the blessing in the use of those means. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth”—*thrust forth*, as the word implies; to *compel* to go forth—“labourers into his harvest.” For if he give the word, great will be the company of the labourers. He is “the Lord of the harvest;” the vast moral field belongs to him; it is his property; his vineyard: he has formed and planted it, and he has a right to reap the fruits thereof.

Press, then, to the throne of grace, to implore that he would look in mercy on his heritage, which is lying waste, vast tracts of Messiah’s blessed kingdom are still unfruitful. The hearts of men, by nature, are unwilling to labour in this heavenly vineyard; rather will they stand idle in the market-place: they must be sought out; they must be searched for; they must be aroused and quickened, and thrust forth by Jehovah himself; their hearts must be warmed by Christ; their affection must be kindled by his grace; a missionary spirit must be awakened. That backwardness to effort, which is so deeply seated in the human heart, must be removed; and a holy devotedness take the place of it. If prayer was more general, more perseveringly aroused, what mighty efforts might we not look for. God would open, as he says in Malachi, the windows of heaven, and pour us down a blessing, that there should not be room enough to receive it. What has not prayer already effected? It has opened and it has shut heaven; it has stopped the invasion of armies; it has raised the dead to life; it has sustained the prisoner in his fetters, and the martyr at his stake; it has secured and brought down the mercy of the God of heaven upon ruined man. Let, then, prayer be poured out for heathen lands.

But before I appeal to you to do this, I feel that a previous question must be first asked:—Do you pray for *yourself*? Do you feel the value of your own soul? Alas, many there are in a Christian land, surrounded by the light of the Gospel, possessing every religious privilege which can bless and enlighten a nation, and yet, who care not for God, neither is God in all their thoughts. Am I speaking to any such to-day? Am I addressing any, upon whom the light of truth is shining, and the gospel of salvation is shedding its beams around, and yet not one ray of that light has ever pierced the gloom of their own hearts? Suffer me, brethren, to plead with you, not so much on behalf of the poor heathen, as for your souls. My beloved brethren, death and eternity are hastening; soon will the shadows of evening fall; soon will these means of grace be over. No sound of mercy echoes through the abode of woe; no voice of warning is heard there; the gulf is closed, and hope is gone. Oh, then, begin; begin while hearing of the state of the poor heathen, to think and to pray for yourselves. If God by his grace touch your hearts; if he be pleased to awaken you to a sense of your danger, and of the value of the Gospel, oh how gladly, how joyfully will you contribute to send forth the word of life among the benighted regions of the earth. None will then leave this church, without having raised a prayer, and without having dropped their contributions, however small that offering may be, for the cause of the Christian missionary.

The Christian who values his own privileges must, he cannot help, feeling for those of others. Oh, let it not be said, that the benevolence of this parish is confined within its own comparatively narrow limits; let it not be said, that while our local charities are supported, and most important and most invaluable are those local charities to this parish, yet let it not be said that charity is confined to them; that we cannot look beyond our own limits, to the far distant lands of the heathen. God grant that a missionary spirit may be aroused in Islington; God grant that the appeals which have been this day made to your hearts in behalf of this Society, may awaken in your breast a feeling of sympathy and compassion for the heathen lands, which shall never be allayed while one benighted region of our globe continues unsupplied with the light of the Gospel. Let it be one of the fruits of the progress of religion, which I rejoice to think is going forward in this parish—I say, let it be one of the fruits of this, that Christian love, and Christian charity is produced among us. And not merely among the more wealthy and rich of the families here; why are the poor, the servant, the domestic, to be debarred from throwing in the mite into the treasury of God? That mite will not be overlooked. He who declared that the poor widow, who cast in her two mites, had given more than all who had given of their abundance to the treasury of God, will receive and bless the offering of the poor.

Remember that God, my brethren, works by means: and here is a vast harvest to be gathered. Will God gather it by a miracle, or will he reap it by an instantaneous effort of his hand? This is not the ordinary course of his dealings with men: God employs the instrumentality of men in reaping the fruits of the earth. And then, how are they to go forth if you send them not? "How," says the Apostle, "shall they preach, except they be sent?" Yes, beloved brethren; beautiful are the feet of those who carry good tidings of

good, who publish peace. May these spiritual watchmen be increased and multiplied among us. May they feel a warmer zeal unite their hearts. "For Zion's sake let them not hold their peace, and for Jerusalem's sake let them not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp which burneth."



## THE INCOMPETENCY OF REASON, AND THE FITNESS OF REVELATION.

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ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH, SEPTEMBER 14, 1834\*.

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“Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”—ACTS, xvii. 23.

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THIS discourse of St. Paul is an admirable specimen of that sound discretion, in the exercise of which, without compromising principle—yea, rather for the very purpose of asserting and enforcing principle—he “became all things to all men.” For it was not his *doctrine* that he accommodated to the views of his hearers: that he never changed or modified: the truth which he taught was always the same truth, for it was the truth as it is in Jesus. It was simply his manner of stating, and illustrating, and proving the truth, that he varied according to circumstances, to suit the different classes with which he had to deal, and the different degrees and states of knowledge with which he came in contact; that so the truth might have a favourable hearing. He became all things to all men, if by any means he might gain some.

This is plainly necessary in every attempt to convince and persuade reasonable men. There must be some mutually acknowledged principle; we must take some common ground on which to build our argument; and that ground must differ in regard to different individuals and classes of individuals. Thus, in arguing with the Jews on the one hand, and the Gentiles on the other, concerning the truth and reasonableness of the Gospel, the Apostle did not adopt the same mode; he proceeded according to the different principles they were willing to acknowledge. In the case of the Jews, the common ground he had with them was, the Old Testament Scriptures. In the case of the Gentiles, the common ground was, what are called the articles of natural religion, whether the discoveries of reason or the traditional remains of original revelation. Yet still the Apostle always aimed at the same result, the bringing both Jews and Gentiles to the knowledge and the belief of the grace and the judgment of God in Christ. Here in particular, in the Areopagus of Athens, and addressing the chief men of that learned and polite city, he takes a tone of high moral dignity, well befitting the place and the audience: the place—that venerable hall of judgment where, in circumstances not altogether unlike his own, the wisest of men once pleaded the cause of a sounder faith against the bigotry of his more ignorant countrymen: the audience—the select and chosen among those whose profound wisdom, on all subjects of human thought, is still the admiration and the delight of the world. He met them on their own field, and fought them with their own

\* For the benefit of the Gaelic Schools.

weapons: yet he spared them not; he shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.

The discourse begins with a bold uncompromising charge of ignorance of what they professed much to study—the Divine Nature; and ends with a solemn statement of the resurrection of Christ from his vicarious grave, as proving both the present grace and the future judgment of the Lord; and so he fulfils the design which is pronounced in the words of the text, “Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”

Now, the charge brought against these men of Athens, placed as they were in the very centre and strong hold of the highest cultivation of human reason, may be regarded as equivalent to a charge of insufficiency or incompetency against that reason itself in its best estate: and the Apostle’s undertaking to instruct these learned reasoners, is equivalent to an assertion of the fitness of revelation to supply the deficiency and to help out the infirmity of human reason; which points, accordingly, we propose now to consider; premising only further, that, when we speak in accordance with common language, on the subject of natural religion, or the religion of reason as distinguished from revelation, we do not mean to hold either that natural reason would have been able to originate such a religion, or that religion should have been so originated: the first of which assertions is at least very doubtful; and the second is opposed both to reason and Scripture; both indicating a primeval religion imperfectly preserved, and corrupted by tradition; or (it may be) that there is an amount of religious truth which natural reason, when once it has got a hold of, can ascertain and prove; which, however, is to be received on the evidence of argument, and which may fitly prepare the way for the more proper and peculiar discoveries of revelation, to be received on the evidence of the testimony of God, the faith of the record of God.

The religion, then, of these Athenians may be regarded as representing the religion of natural reason, as it existed under the most favourable circumstances: and that religion is here pronounced to be insufficient, not by the advocate of revelation rejecting reason altogether as quite inadmissible in such a question, but by one who himself, in the sequel, appeals to reason as good, so far as it goes, though it does not go far enough. “I perceive,” says the Apostle, “that in all things ye are too superstitious”—too prone, that is, to the fear of invisible powers. Such is the meaning of the word: to stand in awe, in dread of something formidable, unseen, and unknown. Accordingly the Apostle so explains his own accusation in the twenty-third verse: taking advantage of an inscription which he observed on one of their own altars, he shows them to be ignorant according to their own confession, in regard to the object of their worship, and therefore superstitious in worshipping him. “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown God.’”

Now, their ignorance in regard to the object of their worship was two-fold: both as to the nature of God in himself, and as to the character which God assumes in relation to his creatures. First of all, they knew not what he was; nor, secondly, did they know how he was dealing with them. In the twenty-fourth and twenty-ninth verses, we see what ideas they entertained concerning

the nature of God. They believed that he dwelt in temples made with hands, or that he was like to gold or silver graven by art and man's device. And then, again, in the twenty-fifth verse, we see what ideas they entertained of God in his relation to his reasonable creatures: they conceived of him as being worshipped and propitiated with men's offerings, as though he needed something.

But more, they worshipped God in ignorance of his real nature; they did not know him as a spiritual subsistence. They conceived of him as having a bodily structure, occupying an earthly habitation. The Godhead they considered to be well represented by idols of gold or silver, graven by man's device, and fitly and literally lodged in temples made with hands.

Now, in so far as ignorance on this point is concerned, it is not chargeable as a defect on natural religion, or the religion of reason: it is the fault of those who will not use their natural religion aright on the subject. For mark: the Apostle, in replying to such unworthy views of the Divine Nature, appeals to natural reason itself as quite sufficient to have taught men better. He argues with them on the principles of their own common sense. In the twenty-fourth verse: He who made and upholds all things, the great First Cause, the Ruler of the universe, must be an intelligent mind: he cannot be, as you suppose, like a stock or a stone: your own reason must show that his nature is a spiritual nature. And this is further evident from the consideration of your own nature. He who made you rational intelligent beings, must be himself a Rational Intelligent Spirit. This is the Apostle's argument in the twenty-ninth verse; for having occasion to quote the sentiment of one of their own poets—"We are all his offspring"—he returned again to the subject of the nature of God, and uses this as arguing, that there must be some correspondence between the cause and the effect.

In considering, therefore, the world around us, so full of proofs of design; and our own spirits, so fearfully and wonderfully made, natural religion is sufficient to teach us that there must be a great designing Cause, a Spiritual Being, whose intelligence pervades all his works. So far human reason, rightly exercised, is a sure and competent teacher of religion; and as such the Apostle Paul recognises it in the first chapter of Romans, when he says that, the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen in the things that he hath made; so that men are without excuse, because when they might have known God as a spiritual being, they "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

Ignorance, then, superstition on this part of the subject (we mean, the nature of God as a spiritual being), is not an evil for which natural religion is fairly responsible. Reason, judging from the evidence of design, of intention, and contrivance—the wise adaptation of good means and modes to good ends in the constitution of external nature, and the constitution of every human being, can confidently announce this fundamental truth of religion, that there is a Supreme Intelligence, a Spiritual Being, whose energy is above, around, and in all his creatures. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy works." All his works praise him: and the more we know of the vast extent and the arrangements of these works, the more we know of the wondrous riches and understanding of the Infinite Mind which planned them all.

It is the reward of science, as in enlarged views she grasps unlimited space, and views in their progress the unnumbered orbs, and almost seems to regulate the majesty of their movements; so that the wandering planet returns after long absence at the very instant of its appointed time, as though at the bidding of her potent spell: or, again, as with keen and prying eyes she searches every nook and recess of this earth, and drags to light tokens and traces of another world, and finds in all new proofs of exquisite and beautifully adjusted harmony of design; or, again, as she tortures every substance of nature with inquisitorial research, to extort the secrets of its structure, and observes, with increasing intensity of interest, the bones, and sinews, and nerves, of this marvellously compacted frame of ours: oh, is it not the great and glorious reward of science, to see, at every step she takes in these her several and various paths, the almighty, the intelligent mind of a God; and instead of impiously arrogating to herself a poor and ephemeral honour for the discoveries that she makes, joyfully and cheerfully to ascribe to the Creator alone all the glory and all the praise of that consummate unerring wisdom which these discoveries do more and more every day, from all his works, convince us in all corners of his dominions do abound.

Far, very far, then, be it from any devout mind, out of an unreasonable jealousy, to resist or stay the progress of discovery, or to look with suspicious eye on efforts for the advancement of knowledge. To enlarge the information as to the nature of the universe, can never be dangerous to him who engages in it, and necessarily leads to discoveries of Him who is the God of Truth. Full scope is given to inquire into all the wonders, whether of the natural world without, or the mental world within. It is your dignity, it is your duty so to inquire. You are men; and you are commanded to be men in understanding: and as men you are to assert your privilege of investigating all the works of your Creator: and in so doing you are to follow truth wherever it may lead. You are not constituted the judges of consequences and results: your business is with the truth itself; not to determine what *should be*, but to discover what *is*. This is the course becoming alike the reason and the infirmity of man; these are the limits within which you are safely and surely set. Cast your eye all around; only prosecute your investigations with due caution, and put them faithfully and fairly together; and you may fearlessly go on to the conclusion which is suggested, that they shall all tend to shed new lustre on the wisdom in which the Lord has made all his manifold works.

Doubtless it may be said, and said truly, that such minute inquiry into the secrets of nature, is not necessary to evince the knowledge of nature's God: there need not be any such extensive accumulation of proofs and evidences; the argument of design lies on the very surface of creation, so plain that even he who runs may read; and the statement of the argument in a single sentence, is enough to show the existence of a Being not confined to temples made with hands, nor like unto gold, or silver, or stone—a Spirit infinite in power and wisdom. Even unlearned men, from a single such evidence of design, may be made to see the nature of God, and the absurdity of those conceptions of the Deity which vulgar superstition creates. Yet it is not unsatisfactory to put the question to a more rigorous test, to trace out more fully the operations of the Divine Understanding: and every pursuit is profitable, as well as pleasing,



which tends to enlarge our views of the Eternal Mind, removing us to a still greater distance from those fancied deities whom the heathen worship.

Thus far, then, natural religion is competent to remove the ignorance which the Apostle charges upon the Athenians, and giving right views of God as the intelligent Being, the Source of all design, the Father of spirits. This is enough to *know* God: but this does not fully declare to us that God who is to be the object of our worship. To know what God is, as the Great First Cause, is much; but something more is necessary, even to *know him in his relation to ourselves*, his designs and doings with regard to us. This is essential to all true religion; this is wanting to complete our knowledge of God: this is it that gives to religion its distinctness and its depth. All our views of God would be unintelligible, or too indefinite without it. When we conceive of Him as he is in himself, dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory, we attain some sort of dim conception of infinite and eternal grandeur; and even emotions of sublimity may arise within us. But there is no hold taken of the understanding; there is no impression made upon the heart. We turn from this abstract contemplation of the glory of God, to the brightness of that glory as it is revealed in all his works. We look to him as the Author of nature, and the Upholder of nature's operations. Here we tread a surer and firmer ground; here we have something that satisfies us: but it does not satisfy us altogether. "All men," it was said of old—"all men long for God:" but what sort of god is it that they long for; or how is it that they seek to know him? Not as he is in himself—not as he is to be known in his works—not as he is in relation to them, intelligent and responsible beings. But *this* is being regardful of God, what he is in relation to us, and how he deals with us: *this* is the question which presses urgently on the mind: and this we are bound to entertain. To avoid it is to avoid, by far, the most momentous view of God. To rest content without an adequate and satisfying solution of this question, is to know God very partially indeed; and so to subject ourselves, if we worship him at all, to the charge of "ignorantly" worshipping, and therefore being superstitious. You do but half know God if you only know him as the Maker of all things, and the Father of an intelligent offspring.

And yet there are many who only thus know him; many who profess to be very religious, and very intellectual in their religion, far removed from any thing like the gross folly of "changing the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man." Their deity is a pure abstraction of the mind—the spirit, the soul of the universe. And yet, even against such, it were not hard to bring forward a charge of superstition. "What!" they may say, "charge superstition upon us? We strongly and scornfully disavow the imputation. What religion can be more rational than ours—what views of the Godhead more pure and spiritual? All that in the least savours of sense, or feeling, or emotion, we exclude carefully and scrupulously. What is there in our notions of the Godhead the least like to superstition?" Yes; but do you not studiously exclude the consideration of God, in his relation to yourselves? Do you take any account of his moral government, his judicial superintendence of your conduct, his right of interference in your concerns? And suppose it should appear, even according to the dictates of sound rational reason, that there is something more to be discovered and known concerning God, than merely that

he is the Intelligent Cause of order, and harmony, and beauty; and yet you refuse to contemplate him in any other light: who now are superstitious? Who now are regardful of an invisible and unknown power? Of whom may it be said, that they "ignorantly worship?" Alas! it is the most melancholy of all delusions, worse than all the follies of the most whimsical superstition, to acknowledge a God at all, if you go no farther than this. What, though it be the truth which you know concerning God, if you only know him as your Creator: are you not still superstitiously worshipping him, ignorantly, and deceiving yourselves? You worship still an "unknown God;" *known*, indeed, in one view of him, as the Great Creating Intelligence; *unknown*, in what is infinitely more important—his relation to you: and what, then, is your worship—what your religion? A pleasing, sentimental fancy, a figure of personification, a vision of glory and of beauty that may shed a living harmony and grace over your abstruse researches. But it is powerless to reach the heart and recall it to serious and holy thought: it establishes no fellowship between the Creator and the creature: it calls forth no emotion of reverence, no fear of Deity. It amuses the mind while occupied with the works of God: it brings back the heart near to God himself; for "he that cometh to God must believe," not only "that he is, but "that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Now then, secondly, we are to inquire, what reason can do towards setting aright this second question, of the knowledge of God.

Here, as well as in the former case, the Apostle charges the Athenians with ignorantly worshipping God: at the twenty-fifth verse, that they worshipped God in ignorance of his real nature; and now he tells them, that they worshipped God in ignorance of the relation in which he stood to them. They worshipped God, as though in some measure he depended on them—as though he was to be benefited by their services, and so to be propitiated. They regarded his friendship as to be purchased by gifts, or won by propitiation. Now, with regard to such dishonourable views of God, the Apostle appeals to the judgment of natural reason itself; he exposes its absurdity on the principles of common sense. It is impossible God can stand in need of anything at our hand, seeing "he gives to all, life, and breath, and all things." Such is the conclusion of the Psalmist: "Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee." It is thus inconsistent with the ideas of God's sovereignty, and our knowledge of him as the Source of all blessing, to suppose our services could be anything to God, or could settle the controversy that exists between us. God is not to make terms with us, nor are we to treat for conditions with him. What then is God's mode of dealing with us; or how does God deal in relation to us? Does natural religion solve the difficulty? Does natural religion throw any light on this part of the subject? Natural religion lays down the original design of God in all his bounties heaped upon us. We find ourselves personally under the care and kindness of God, and conscience tells us the design he has in view. "He giveth us life, and breath, and all things," and causes us still to dwell on the face of the earth—why? That we "may seek the Lord, if haply we might feel after him."

Thus far all is clear: but then the fact of our sin materially alters our case. The bounty of God is continued and prolonged, though his original design in bestowing it is not fulfilled. Hence arises the difficulty, as to what

God now needs, and how he stands related to us. And this is precisely the knot which reason cannot untie, which requires revelation to solve. When first we seek to form a conception of God in relation to us, we look around to the world abroad, to the constitution of external nature. We see the system of things arranged, with a view to the happiness of the creatures of God; we see benevolence pervading all his plans: not one instance of purpose or contrivance can be brought forward which has anything like a malevolent design. We see how he causes all the fair face of nature to smile with ineffable attractions. We see how liberally and luxuriantly he showers down the gifts of his abundant blessings. Is it not He who clothes the grass with more than royal glory, and provides for the fowls of heaven? Is it not he that hath made us mind and body, and given us the sense of enjoyment? Does not every object that affords us pleasure, bear evidence to the good will of Him, who has so constituted us to receive, and so made the object to afford—the pleasure? Does not every day bring with it new proofs of God's design to make us happy? For what else does he keep us in safety, load us with benefits, and give us food, and raiment, and all things richly to enjoy? Oh, it cannot be that He who has placed us amidst so much that speaks of his own goodness and beneficence, can be otherwise than favourably disposed towards us: it cannot be that he seeks anything else than our happiness, our comfort, our enjoyment.

But then, we turn our eyes within, and there a still small voice reminds us of the righteous authority of our God. Conscience gives us the notion of a Being having the moral attributes of justice, and holiness, and truth. Some causes of apprehension might arise from the world without, as we see there tokens and traces of our ruin. There is much in the world around that speaks of a God of judgment: but there is in the world within, in the conscience, which speaks to us with a voice which we cannot always resist—there is something that will far more emphatically remind us of a God of righteous severity. We feel the purpose for which we were created—to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever. We feel there must be a reason in all this bounteous liberality, even that we may seek after the Lord, if haply he may be found of us. And when conscience tells us this design has not been fulfilled; that we have not thus acknowledged the Lord; then arises the difficulty—How are the tokens of love in the world around us, and the forbodings of ill in the world within us, to be harmonized and reconciled?

Here it is that the necessity arises for the interposition of another method, to declare to us that God, whom otherwise we must “ignorantly worship:” and here, accordingly, it is, that the Apostle brings in the doctrines of revelation to solve the difficulty. Men were created that they might seek after the Lord and find him: and, when they did not find him, what was the Lord's method of acting? “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men, everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.” We must look to the dispensation of the Gospel, the dispensation of God's long-suffering, as preparatory to God's judgment—to the dispensation of grace, as preparatory to the dispensation of wrath—if we would rightly understand how these two opposite testimonies are to be reconciled—the testimony of nature without, the testimony of conscience within. Nature speaks of a God of love, loading us with a father's liberality, and watching over us with a father's care:



conscience speaks to us of a God of judgment ; tells us we have not fulfilled the design for which our God placed us in the world ; and reminds us we are exposed to his wrath. And how is it these two testimonies are to be reconciled ? In the cross of Christ. Look to the cross of our Lord and Saviour : you see there, something correspondent to the love wherewith all God's works do show that he abounds towards us, for he so loved the world that he spared not his only begotten Son, but delivered him to the death for us all. And is there not a reason for the cross of Christ echoing back the testimony that conscience gives to the justice of our righteous Judge ? Is there not a token in the cross of Christ of God's indignation against sin, and of his determination to uphold the sanction of his law, and to visit sin with its penalty ? Is there not in the sufferings of Christ on the cross ; his unknown and inconceivable sufferings ; is there not a prefiguration of that wrath which remaineth for those who will not accept of the offer of mercy ?

The remarks that have now been made, will show the importance of a real knowledge of God above all other knowledge : without it all other knowledge is unprofitable, a curse instead of a blessing. And the paramount importance of the view which the Gospel gives of God, as distinguished from the view which nature gives, will appear from the consideration, that ultimately it must be the view which all of us shall be compelled to take : for the spirit of every one departing from this world, must pass into the presence of God, and come into close contact, so to speak, with all his majesty, as a just God and a Saviour. And what will all our knowledge avail us, pleasing and profitable as it must be, in this world, when we come to God, not as a God afar off, but as near, and as a God of judgment ? There is a pleasure, however, elevating and ennobling, in the approach after truth ; there is a satisfaction in the cultivation of strong and intellectual powers : and many there are who can give themselves up to intense and untiring energy in the searching out of nature's works and the questioning of intelligent minds : they can give up their days and their nights to the exercise of their intellectual faculties and the generous pursuit of knowledge. But alas ! are there not many who, with all their knowledge, have not that " wisdom that cometh from above "—who, in all there getting get not understanding ? They may feel a proud and high satisfaction, arising from the importance of the knowledge acquired in the successful employment of their powers and faculties of mind. But, brethren, they scarcely meet, in all the various and diversified tracks which they take, and in all the endless variety of objects which encounter their judgments—they scarcely ever meet their God ; they scarcely ever find him in the way ; they scarcely ever seek him. In the wondrous element, the richly scattered treasures of power, and wisdom, and goodness, through which they make their progress, they cannot shut their eyes to the presence of God ; they must acknowledge a God : but it is God with attributes of their own choosing, not the God of Scripture—the God of nature, not the God of justice. *Him* they exclude from their view ; *Him* they do not like to retain in their thoughts ; and in the circumstances in which they cultivate the idea of a God, if mingling in their researches at all, they strip their ideas of all which might remind them of their unsettled controversy with him. Conceive of a man in such a state, so blind as to have exercised his powers of discovery, in the full blaze of all the glory and the terrible majesty of



a just God and a Saviour, without really finding him, condemned to carry on his future work of discovery with a clear and startling apprehension of all the moral attributes of God—his holiness, his justice, his truth—all as manifested in the cross of Christ, and all still carried on in a carnal mind, and a self-condemned heart. Where now will be the joy of his lofty inquiries? Where now the triumphs of his lofty powers of knowledge? Every object he contemplates now, is connected with the idea of a righteous God; every subject he can examine now, is fraught with the presence of a righteous God; every new ray of light that meets his eye, reveals to him a righteous God; every sound carries to his ear the name of God, repeated by a thousand echoes. He can make no experiment now, that will not show him more of the wonders and the terrors of God. He can look at nothing, he can think of nothing, that does not speak to him of God, and remind him of Deity: and all the bold traces of his profound discoveries regarding nature, now do but suggest reminiscences of nature's God as a God of judgment; and so the very faculty which was once his pride and admiration—the capacity of deep reflection and enlightened inquiry, does but add new sting and torture to his reprobate mind,\* by suggesting always, everywhere, and in all things, new images and representations of that awful, that almighty Being, whom he has chosen to make his foe.

Such is the indispensable necessity of a right knowledge of God in his character as the Moral Governor of the universe, in the light in which Scripture presents him. Without this knowledge, all our advances in other branches of knowledge are but vain and unprofitable: with it, how delightful, how pleasing, how elevating are they! To see, at every step of our progress, the wonders of nature—to see traces and vestiges of the wisdom of our God, and to know him that he is a reconciled God and Father—here is the true blessing of knowledge—here is the true design of searching into nature's works.

Since the knowledge of God in this his peculiar, his scriptural character, as the God of grace now, and of judgment hereafter—since the knowledge of God is of this vast importance, how paramount is the obligation which lies upon us to diffuse that knowledge! All other knowledge is *useful*, *entertaining*: this alone is *needful*. This may do without knowledge, but no other knowledge will do without this. If you teach men the elements of education, you put into their hands a powerful weapon either for good or for evil, according to the direction that may be given to it. If you put into their hands the elements of sound religion, if you teach them the truths of Scripture, you give their minds a right and safe exercise; while those truths yield to their minds such a knowledge of God as a Saviour, Ruler, and Judge, as will keep them from the abuse of the tremendous power you put into their hands. We have seen that whilst all nature speaks open.v or a designing God, it gives but obscure, and difficult, and dark intimations of a righteous Ruler, and Lawgiver, and Saviour. You must spread along with other knowledge, the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. You must make men acquainted with the cross of Christ; and then you will give them the knowledge of God, whom else they can only “ignorantly worship.”

We to-day request your sympathy on behalf of the Highland Society, whose sacred and exclusive object is to teach the Bible, and to teach the Bible alone. And without at all detracting from other knowledge—nay, ascribing all merit to it—we say that the more you encourage the teaching of secular knowledge, the more you are to encourage the teaching of that knowledge which is required

to complete and to continue it. You have in this Society one which labours to diffuse among your ignorant and benighted countrymen the Word of God, the Gospel of salvation, which may do, without any other knowledge, for man's direction in life, and his salvation in eternity, but without which all other knowledge is vain. This is adapted alike for all, learned and ignorant: this is what we all need to know ourselves, and to teach to others. The inhabitants of the distant parts of our land, separated as they are by mountains and arms of the sea, have been but poorly provided with ministers and teachers: the parishes being of unmanageable extent, the admirable machinery of our parochial teachers and parochial schools has not been fairly brought to bear upon them. The mountaineers in the remoter districts have been literally left to perish from lack of knowledge, without the advantages which, by the blessing of God, we in these regions enjoy: they have been left, and, humanly speaking, might still have been left, in ignorance of the great truths of salvation, but for the existence of this Institution. Some few years since this Society first called the attention of the Christian public to the claims of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Other institutions have now been founded; other efforts are now making for communicating the knowledge of the truth to them: but will you forsake and suffer to decline that Society, to which must be assigned the credit of having first stirred up an interest in the Lowlands of Scotland on behalf of our less favoured brethren?

The management under which this Society is placed, is such as to secure your countenance and support. It is one of the express and special rules of the Society, that its teachers are confined strictly to the work of instruction: wherever they have been found to interfere with the work of the ministry, and so as we suppose) weaken the hands of the ministry, the teacher has been at once discharged. The Society may claim your support as having been already proved to be abundantly beneficial. Instances are on record of the good effects produced in large districts of country, by these same schools which you are invited to support. Instances are on record of fathers and grandfathers crowding with their own children to these schools, where thus they have been brought to read in their own tongue of the wonderful works of God. Instances are on record of the means of reading being provided for those whose eye-sight has been dimmed by age. And when, by any cause, the schools have been removed from the neighbourhood where long they have existed, the people, poor as they are, have contributed their money to retain among them those teachers whom they have cause to reverence as, through God's blessing, the means of awakening their souls. These are the people who now stretch forth their hands for assistance; surely you will not refuse them—you who are wont to speak with enthusiasm of our Highland scenery, and our island rocks. The men of science find in their caverns the elements of profoundest wisdom; the men of taste admire their romantic glens and towering prospects; the men of imagination are roused by the records of heroism, and are affected by the warmth of hospitality, that are there to be met with: and will you not lend your aid to communicate to them the benefits you enjoy, in being permitted to sit under your own vine and your own fig-tree, and to read in your own tongue of all that God hath done for you? Do your part to strengthen the hands of its managers and teachers, that there may not be any longer a famine in the land—a famine, not of bread or water, but a famine of the Word of the Living God.

## COMING TO JESUS A MOTIVE FOR BRINGING OTHERS TO HIM

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“ And he brought him to Jesus.”—JOHN, 1. 42.

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THE most important and endearing elements of character are derived from association with others. It is one of the great laws of our nature that our principles, and habits, and all that distinguishes the complexion of our mental and moral being, should be mainly dependant on the minds and characters of those with whom we voluntarily associate. Sometimes events, to our apprehensions seemingly contingent, bring us into contact with such as exert the most powerful influence on our whole lives. How often are talents elicited, trains of emotion kindled, modes of thinking and feeling originated, resolutions and determinations formed, at one interview, with some master-spirit, that may affect the entire complexion of a man's history and character, and fix the elements, not only of his future, but his final destination ?

In the recollection of events, these circumstances stand out before the memory in bold and prominent relief; and they never can be forgotten: and in no respect is this principle more strongly illustrated than in the history of a sinner's conversion to God. The value of such a crisis does not result from its connexion with any order of human instrumentality, however interesting or delightful it may be to trace it back: it derives its importance from its being the time when, and the means by which, to use the simple but comprehensive phraseology of the text—a man is “brought to Jesus.” It is the commencement of an intimacy with the Saviour; it is the formation of a friendship, which shall form his character in time, and fix his destiny for ever. To be introduced to Jesus, to be acquainted with Jesus, to become one of his disciples, to yield the understanding to the authority of his word, and the conscience to the claims of his law, and the heart to the demands of his love, and the life to the interests of his service, is the very character and essence of all true godliness. And this is the turning point on which depends the interest of time, and the momentous results of eternity. Such an event, however brought about, by whatever means effected, cannot be lost from the recollection; and the very locality connected with such an event (where you can so connect it) acquires an interest and an attraction superior to all other sources of influence in the world. Can those disciples, who for the first time met with the Son of God, forget the day and the period of that interview? Can the woman of Sicar forget the well of Jacob? Can Zaccheus forget the sycamore tree? Can Paul the Apostle forget the way

to Damascus, or the house of Judas in the street which was called Straight? Impossible.

My friends, it is in perfect accordance with all these incidents, and the sympathies they awaken, and the results arising out of them, that we are assembled here this morning, to implore the divine blessing on the hallowed cause of missions, and to increase our own attachment and devotion to that cause. For what is the simple object we have in view, the object of the Sabbath, and the sanctuary, and the means of grace, and the institutions of religion, and all the possible and varied forms in which divine truth can be presented to the attention of mankind: what is the one simple and comprehensive object of all these associations and all these efforts? To bring men to Jesus; to introduce them to him; to cause them to enjoy friendship with the Son of God on earth; and thus to prepare them to be for ever with the Lord.

The narrative connected with the text will furnish ample material for the illustration of two simple propositions, which will constitute the basis of our reasoning and appeal upon the present occasion. We are told by the inspired evangelist, that "John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." Now, there are two principles suggested by this narrative: in the first place, that true religion is the result of personal conviction respecting the claims of Jesus Christ; and in the second place, that those who have thus become the disciples of Christ will be anxiously concerned to bring others to the knowledge of the same Redeemer. In one word, you have in this principle the duty of the converted to the unconverted. That duty constitutes the basis of missionary enterprise: a just estimation of this object must pervade our minds, must affect our hearts, must be solemnly before us in all its momentous reality and infinite importance; or in vain will be all our exertions and efforts.

TRUE RELIGION IS THE RESULT OF PERSONAL CONVICTION RESPECTING THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST. You must possess that religion yourselves, or you never can attempt, successfully and scripturally, to impart it to others; nor have you reason to expect the divine sanction to your efforts, or that the divine blessing will rest on your engagements, if your efforts and your engagements are not the expression and the reality of personal conviction. It is the order of the gracious covenant, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." It is the order of, and in perfect harmony with, that promise—"God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." It is the order recognised by the Divine Redeemer in the promise of his own Spirit, and the illustration given of the nature of true religion, and the benevolent results of it.



“He that believe thou me shall never thirst; and from within him shall flow rivers of living water.” Let this conviction, then, be solemnly reflected upon by you. It is possible to contemplate the missionary enterprise, and all the sublime and interesting aspects that enterprise presents, rather as a matter of gratification that may delight the understanding or regale the imagination. But, viewed in its proper light, it is a matter affecting the conscience, and arising out of the impressions and the feelings of the heart. Would you secure, therefore, an enlightened devotion to the cause of missions, and the steady occupation of all your powers and energies in the prosecution of that cause, you must yourselves be possessed of a personal acquaintance with Jesus: the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus as your Lord, must be a matter, not of theory, and speculation, and profession, but of principle, and experience, and conviction.

This applies to all the objects we contemplate in relation to the interests of our fellow creatures at home, and the extension of religion in the world around us. On this account, therefore, the truth respecting Christ must be *known*—you must *know* it: for acquaintance with Christ is the knowledge of Christ; and the knowledge of Christ is essentially connected with the love of Christ, as the medium and the material of that knowledge. You cannot now be personally introduced to Jesus of Nazareth, as was Simon Peter, by Andrew his brother, or Nathaniel by Philip: but all that was substantially secured by the actual and literal converse of those disciples with Jesus; is secured by genuine religion wherever it exists; for it was a personal conviction founded on the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Therefore from this principle, you perceive, arises the importance of the Christian ministry, and the great design of that ministry. What is that design? For what was the Christian ministry instituted? Merely to enable a fellow creature to stand before you, and expatiate for a while on some moral or philosophical subject, for your gratification or amusement? No: the object of this hallowed office is that for which John himself stood in the presence of the altar, and the sacrifice, and all the apparatus of ancient dispensation, and said to his disciples as Jesus passed by, “Behold the Lamb of God.” And this is the end for which *we* are to teach; and every discourse we deliver should direct our hearers to Jesus. For what is truth, but the word of Christ; and what is duty but the law of Christ; and what is faith but the reception of Christ; and what is obedience but the service of Christ; and what is devotion but the enjoyment of the presence and the love of Christ? Therefore, in the character of the Redeemer, every principle of religion is involved: in the grace and truth revealed by the Son of God, are comprehended all the elements, and aspects, and combinations of that divine system of truth, which constitutes “the whole counsel of God.” We must hide ourselves in the shadow of our God, and make it the object of our prayers and efforts to direct others to him—to feel that, if he be received, if he be known, if he be enjoyed, then the great end of our missions and our ministry is accomplished.

Oh, what sublimity and attraction are connected with this grace and this truth! How did the great Apostle of the Gentiles feel their sublimity and their attractiveness, when he said, It is “my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death;

for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Hence we are to exhibit them as the very means of bringing men to become acquainted with him, and to enjoy all the blessings he has to bestow. We are to exhibit him as the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega. And what is the object of revelation, and of the Christian revelation more especially, if that does not lead to him, and include him as the sum of every doctrine, and the substance of the truth and the reality of every type, and the theme of every prophecy, and the motive of every precept, and the glory and the elevation of every divine institution? As well might

be imagined there is an artery in the human system which is not connected with the heart, or that there is a planet in the solar system withdrawn from the centre of attraction, as to suppose any part of the divine testimony not connected with the glory, the grace, and the truth of the Divine Redeemer.

But we are to know this, to feel the importance of it, to be conscious of the claims involved in it—in one word, to seek Christ. You have, in the narrative connected with our text, a delightful illustration of the very way in which personal religion commences, and the leading features by which its principles are distinguished. If you are seeking after Christ, if you are really disposed to become acquainted with Christ, you will imitate these disciples of John. When they were directed to Jesus, they were not satisfied, as many are when they hear of the subject in the sanctuary, with a passing glance, a momentary direction of the mind, or the impulse of curiosity: but they looked to Jesus; and they followed him, and, whatever may have been the apparent difficulties in the way of access, yet they sought to obtain an interview; they directly addressed him; they were received with all the graciousness and benignity of incarnate love; they dwelt with him that night. And what a night was it! They will never, to all eternity, forget the first time they saw him; the first time they heard his voice, the first time they yielded their hearts to the authority of his law; when they became his; when the disciple was forgotten in the Master, and all the splendour of the meteor was lost in the blaze of the Sun of Righteousness. Oh, they never can forget that day and that hour; for then commenced their friendship with Christ, and their friendship was the result of personal and individual conviction, and they rested not till they obtained it; and they became at once his avowed disciples. My friends, I do not say there is any particular specific process, according to which your religious experience and feelings, and the order of your emotions or inquiries, must be conducted, to make you disciples of Christ. I am perfectly aware of an immense diversity in this respect, in the operations of the Divine Spirit; how some are brought at once from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, (and they will as soon forget an escape from shipwreck as forget the very time, and manner, and circumstances connected with their first interview with their Saviour, and their first subjection to his authority;) and how others may be led by a very slow and gradual method; scarcely perceptible, affording but few points of prominent recollection. Still the result is the same: they are "brought to Jesus;" and they are brought to him as the result of inquiry—inquiry continued; inquiry followed by prayer; inquiry marked by solicitude, and anxiety, and demonstration; inquiry terminating in personal and individual conviction, and examination of the truth for themselves; not resting on educational impressions, or the authority of others, or the religion of the nation, or any other exterior cause.

but having received the truth in the love of it, they become the disciples of Jesus. In one word, personal religion is personal union with Christ. Union with Christ is, more than any other in the Sacred Volume, exhibited as the distinguishing feature of his people. By virtue of this union with Christ, under the sanctifying influence of the Divine Spirit, you become new creatures in Christ Jesus. By virtue of this union with Christ, all the blessings of his great salvation become yours: for union is the foundation of fellowship, and fellowship leads to resemblance, and resemblance secures practical obedience and devotion. Thus you see how all the elements of the Christian character, all the peculiarities of vital religion, are included in this simple, yet comprehensive view of the subject—that the true disciples of Christ enjoy a personal conviction respecting his claims, and yield themselves supremely to his service.

Before I proceed to the illustration of the second topic suggested by this passage, let me remind you of one thing: that there is everything in the character and religion of Jesus Christ to deserve your investigation, to attract your regard, and to justify your attachment. When these disciples said to Jesus, "Where dwellest thou," what was the answer of Jesus? "Come and see." There was a characteristic display of his own grace and condescension, of his own sympathy and love, in the reply he gave to these sincere inquirers. And the language of the Saviour may be viewed as strictly illustrative of the whole system of Christianity. There is nothing which shrinks from inquiry, nothing which avoids scrutiny, and everything to challenge investigation, and everything to reward the most profound and penetrating investigation of the whole subject. On the evidences of the Gospel, or the doctrines of the Gospel, or the institutions of the Gospel, on the whole system of religion, you may see visibly inscribed, "Come and see." Therefore those who go forth to distant lands to spread the knowledge of Christ, can say to idolaters of every grade, to philosophers of every class, to inquirers after truth, whatever their prejudices or their habits, "Come and see." We have no secrets for the initiated only; we have no mysteries which we dare not develope; we can declare, without hesitation or reserve, the whole counsel of God. "Come and see;" examine for yourselves. these things were not done in a corner; everything will bear the light. Pour on the subject the whole gaze of your minds, and you will find in every exhibition of the truth that which will deserve and justify your supreme devotion.

Let us consider the second principle suggested by the passage—that **THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, WILL BE ANXIOUSLY CONCERNED TO BRING OTHERS TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SAVIOUR.** It is a simple deduction from the first principle stated. The sentiment, no doubt, has often been brought under your notice: but it is of the highest importance to contemplate the subject under the principles it involves and the obligation it enjoins. If you are sincere inquirers after Christ, and, thus inquiring after him, have attained personal conviction as to the result of that inquiry, and can say, in some measure with feelings of glad exultation and holy surprise, what the Apostles felt when they said, "We have found the Messiah:" if you can sympathize with emotions and feelings like these, the natural and the necessary result of these convictions will be, you will communicate the enjoyment of them to others. The very constitution of our nature leads to this: all the sympathies



of our moral being are in harmony with this. Everything in religion is gloriously expansive; and therefore, the more you cherish these feelings and principles, the more you will seek to enlarge the circle of your holy enjoyment, and to impart to others those treasures of heavenly enjoyment, those riches of divine consolation, that you yourselves enjoy.

But the matter does not rest on the mere influence of sympathy, however natural. I would remind you, on this subject, in the first place, of your great object in relation to the practical operation of this principle; of your responsibility in relation to that object; of your opportunities for acting on that responsibility; and of your encouragement to avail yourselves of those opportunities.

Now, what is your *object*—your object as friends of Christianity, your object as supporters of missionary enterprise, your object in meeting from Sabbath to Sabbath, and all your intercourse in the fellowship of the Church of Christ? It is not a sectarian object; it is not to win over others to your party, and to enable them to pronounce the shibboleth of your own creed; it is not to secure any object of political aggrandizement. It is to bring men to Christ. Keep it before you in all your personal intercourse; in your families, in all your local influence in your neighbourhood, in all your communications in your respective communities. If you are aiming at any thing short of this, it is most probable you will fail, even in reference to the subordinate object, that may be important to your own community or your own association. While, on the other hand, in enlarging our minds to the amplitude and sublimity of this higher object, with regard to the salvation of men, their fellowship with Christ, and their preparation for eternal communion with him, we shall lay the most solid and enduring basis for the accomplishment of even the minor objects which conscientiously separate us from one another, but which may still be considered conscientiously subordinate to that greater end. This is the object, in one word, of the great efforts to which Bible societies and missionary operations are directed. Is it not to encounter idolatry, and error, and superstition; to dispel the clouds of moral darkness that are hovering over the world, and to introduce the Sun of Righteousness in all the glory of his rising among the nations? Is it not to say to the slaves of superstition, the worshippers of idols, the devotees of falsehood, and imposture, and delusion, “Behold the Lamb of God?” There you have the origin of true wisdom, the fountain of living waters: there you have the source of divine philosophy to dispel error—righteousness to meet all your moral necessities, and to give you the prospect of peace for eternity: there you find the foundation on which to build your hopes of everlasting happiness. To bring men to Christ, to introduce them to him is to be our object. Let us never forget it: let all our prayers and efforts be concentrated in this important design.

Contemplate your *responsibility* in relation to this object. Are you possessed of the knowledge of Christ? That very knowledge is imparted to you by the Divine Spirit, for the very purpose of enabling you to communicate it to others. We stand in intimate relation to each other: our responsibility arises from our dependance upon others, our social connexion with others, the sympathies of our moral nature, the very claims others have on us arising out of our moral relation. But by the knowledge of Christ as connected with it, and its



positive adaptation to the welfare of others, we increase that responsibility. You have been directed to the knowledge of Christ yourselves, to the great moral remedy for the diseases of the world: you have become acquainted with the Physician of value: and those who know Christ as the great healer of moral disease, naturally direct others to him. We have in the Scriptures many delightful illustrations of the working of this principle, in relation to the diseases of the body: we see how many were led to bring the sick and the dying from great distances to Jesus—for what purpose? That he might touch them, by laying his hands of power and mercy on them, in the assurance that he went about doing good, and healing all manner of diseases. And the very adaptation to this great end, arising from their knowledge of these effects, became the ground of their own responsibility. Why should we reason in regard to moral disease, differently from what we should about natural disease? We know that Providence alone gives success in relation to the healing art: we know that grace alone gives success in relation to the removal of the moral maladies of our nature. But if you had a specific, by which, without any empiricism, you could secure the healing, or the commutation, or the removal of that awful pestilential malady, which in such mysterious forms has been permitted to visit our nation and our globe; if you knew of some absolute and infallible specific, which in any circumstances, however aggravated the symptoms, however hopeless the case might be to all human appearance, yet, that when that remedy was applied, eternal happiness would be the result; would you not deem it right and proper to impart this remedy, and the manner of applying it, not only to your fellow countrymen, but to your fellow-creatures throughout the world? And, if necessary, in proportion to the conviction you had of success as to the result of the scheme, would you not deem it right to employ your benevolence, to send that remedy to the very ends of the earth? And if you found there was a fatal prejudice, misconception, ignorance, both as to the malady, and the means of removing it—that there was great difficulty in introducing the remedy, and in inducing men to avail themselves of it—that would not paralyze your efforts, that would not prevent you from proclaiming its efficacy; but would give greater energy to your exertions in the employment of all the means by which you might hope to succeed, in inducing those who were the victims of the disease, to embrace the remedy you freely offer them.

My Christian friends, I see no essential difference between your responsibility in relation to the souls of others, and your responsibility in relation to the maladies of the body; the sovereignty of God is just as much connected with the one as with the other; and the purposes of God are just as much connected with one as with the other. You are equally commanded to make the remedy known, and to use all the means for its circulation, and all the means of its adaptation to the wretched, perishing family of man. Oh, that I might impress the conviction of this subject in some measure adequate to its magnitude! Your responsibility arises from your knowledge of the remedy—from the adaptation of that remedy to the whole family of man—from your obligation to make it known—and from the express appointment of Him who is the Physician that alone can heal all the maladies of the soul.

In the third place, let me remind you of your *opportunities* of acting on this responsibility. No man was ever disposed to do good who did not find ample

opportunities to do it: however limited his sphere of influence, however contracted his moral and physical powers—however little he was able to effect, no man ever honestly and sincerely felt the disposition to do good, who did not effect it. And *you* have opportunities. You have opportunities of a personal and local character, in relation to your own direct and immediate exertions. It would not be difficult to show our parental duties in all their application to the claims that families have upon us; the duties of masters to their servants, involving the same responsibility, and admitting of constant opportunities of acting on that responsibility; the relation you sustain to your neighbourhood, to your fellow countrymen around you, to all within the possible sphere of your influence at home and abroad. These duties and obligations arise out of the principles I have stated; and all of you, the poor as well as the rich, have opportunities of acting on these principles, and of promoting the most important and beneficial results.

But God has appointed, in order to promote these opportunities, Christian fellowship—the union of believers with each other, for the very purpose of acting out this influence. Why are Churches formed? Why is the Sabbath appointed? Why do you meet from time to time for social prayer? What is the great and ultimate result contemplated by all your meetings and associations? You say, and say justly, our personal and social welfare. But does the matter rest there? You are united, in order to increase your moral power on the surrounding neighbourhood—to widen that fulcrum (so to speak) on which to rest a lever by which to move the world around you. Every Christian, therefore, should regard the Church as appointed for this great and important end—to diffuse the savour of the knowledge of Christ at home and in every place.

And when you contemplate missionary institutions, the religious societies that adorn our country, and form the distinguishing feature of our age, who can say there are not opportunities of every class and in every corner for bringing men to the knowledge of Christ? Oh, that we had more sanctified energy, more of holy zeal, more of a bold and honest determination to confess the Saviour, wherever we have the means and opportunities of directing others to him, as the great Physician! There is in us a vast portion of cowardice, and pusillanimity, worldly temporising, shrinking from duty, fear of reproach, and dread of shame, even amidst all the facilities and privileges we enjoy; fear of being termed fanatical, or enthusiastic, or ostentatious, or obtrusive; and in various ways the great enemy of souls diverts us from the object in which we ought constantly to be engaged. While our opportunities are so numerous and varied—while the character of the times that are passing over us is, of all things, most interesting and momentous—while we behold the chain of slavery broken, and new spheres of operation opened to our view, we ought, at the same time, to recollect that these opportunities are diminishing. Every day is lessening our power of doing good, and our opportunities of consecrating our property, our time, and our influence to the service of the Redeemer, and the welfare of our fellow creatures. You are assembled to-day for the purpose of promoting the interests of the missionary cause. I need not say that all we have now advanced is in perfect harmony with its design, and that the success with which God has blessed it, and the report we are enabled to give of that success, are direct

inducements, and most solemn motives, to perseverance and activity in the cause.

Let me remind you, finally, of *your encouragement to avail yourselves of these opportunities*. You have ample encouragement in the command of the Son of God, in the assurance of his presence, in the promise of the Omnipotent Redeemer, in the success already secured, and in the certainty of eventual and final success in relation to all the objects you are permitted to contemplate. True, indeed, we see not as yet all things put under Him. There are some aspects of the moral world, and even in connexion with the scenes of missionary enterprise, that ought to fill our hearts with deep humiliation before God. It is indeed for a lamentation, that the enemy of souls, by his devices and by his fatal influences over the minds, and the manners, and the habits of men, should be so perpetually impeding and opposing the sacred work. We have reason indeed for humiliation, that even from the scenes of missionary enterprise we receive the intelligence how fatally in various ways, the intemperance, the licentiousness, and the ungodliness of those who visit the distant shores where missionaries are stationed, are counteracting the spread of the Gospel. Now, indeed, have we trials of the stability of our faith; trials of our courage, trials of our perseverance, and above all of our prayers. But we have no reason for despondency; we have sufficient to encourage to the most animated and self-denying exertions: and we are not for a moment to imagine, that the principle of faith requires the fact of success. I have sometimes thought, the most heroic examples of faith are to be found, not where the missionaries have to thrust in the sickle and reap, but where all the time is spent in scattering the seed; in toilsome labour, in self-denying, perilous enterprise, going forth weeping, from day to day; when no prospect of the harvest, when no encouraging intimation is to be perceived; when the man can appeal to nothing in the shape of forcible demonstration to give his message confidence and support; and where, resting simply on the command of Jehovah, he goes forth, exhibiting the work of faith; and thus discharges the labour of love, and thus cherishes amidst disappointment and opposition, the untiring patience of hope. These are illustrations of faith in the divine assurance.

But you have more than this. Whatever may be temporarily or partially discouraging, you have abundant reason to thank God and take courage. And when you remember what facilities the God of Providence is securing in the march of public events, in the establishment of civil and religious freedom; when you contemplate the extent of our mighty empire in the Eastern world, and the new field which is opening for commercial enterprise, the operations of Christian philanthropy, and Christian zeal, must go forward with parallel and commensurate efforts, in this great and glorious undertaking. When you look at what you have reason to anticipate as the result of persevering exertion, you have every encouragement to go forward. "Onward," is the voice of prophecy; "onward" is the voice of Providence. Be concerned, then, to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

My Christian friends, the appeal is now to be made to your liberality, your actual benevolence, as an evidence this morning of your faith, and hope, and love. I know too well the character of the disciples of Christ in this ancient

city, and the deep interest you have long felt in this holy cause, to believe for a moment, that you will this day fail in giving a practical demonstration of the sincerity of your convictions. Keep the great object in view I have simply endeavoured to set before you ; realize to your minds the infinite importance of bringing men to Jesus, and of composing and carrying on that fellowship with Christ, that shall bear them to glory and immortality. In prospect of that day when the Redeemer shall acknowledge and reward all the service rendered to his cause, and performed in his name. Give, as God hath given you ability. Remember, he asks not what is given, but what is lent: he judges of your character, not by your actual contributions, but by the liberality which he himself has imparted to you. May it be your concern to give under that impression, remembering that Jesus still sits over against the treasury ; and while he deigns to employ our services, he graciously promises to reward them hereafter.



## THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS.

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REV. W. JAY.

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“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”—COLOSSIANS, i. 12.

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MY brethren, the goodness of God towards his people is infinite. Reflecting upon it, David found himself perfectly at a loss for words to express it; and therefore he exclaimed, “Oh how great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them, (which thou hast wrought for them) that trust in thee before the sons of men.” He views it, you see, in connexion with glory and grace; he views it in reference to the future and the present. He tells us, they have *more* in *hope*, but they have also *much* in *hand*; they have *more* in *reversion*, but they have also *much* in *possession*. It is very true that this is not their rest; they are only strangers and pilgrims upon earth. But though their manifestation is not arrived, *now* are they “the sons of God:” though the vintage be not come, they have the first fruits: though they are minors now, and under age, they are “heirs;” and they receive their remittances and their supplies; and they have their trainings, and their attendants, and their preparations. Witness the language of our Apostle here: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Let us consider three things: the inheritance, the meetness, and the praise.

First, let us notice THE INHERITANCE itself. Here you will immediately perceive that it is spoken of as *one common state*: as there is one common salvation, so there is one common inheritance. And none, in consequence of this, need feel themselves troubled, because there is an ample sufficiency in it for all. An earthly inheritance, indeed, is impaired and diminished by division: but it is otherwise here. *Here* the number of possessors really adds to the happiness of every individual partaker: and every vessel of glory is as full, as if there were no other to be filled. All of them shine; though one star differeth from another star in glory: all of them dwell in the same heavenly Father's house, though in that house there be many mansions.

How shall we *estimate* this inheritance? By what standard shall we judge it? Compared with this, what is the inheritance of the worldling, abounding with all the honours, riches, and pleasures of the earth? Compared with this, what was the inheritance of the Jews in the land of Canaan—a land flowing

with milk and honey, and the glory of all lands? Compared with this, what was the inheritance of Adam previous to his fall? What was Eden? What was the tree of knowledge—which after a while was felled down, or else died of decay—compared with the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God, and which abideth for ever? Compared with this, what is the inheritance of the saints in glory? He who is their *Lord* is our *Elder Brother*. He did not take upon him *their* nature, but *ours*: he was not made an angel, but a man: and he came into the world, not only that we might have life, but that we might have it “more abundantly.” Angels can never know the pleasures arising from reconciliation, or from the renewal of friendship, with an offended God; with the dislodgment of sin, after being their hateful possessor all through life; their safety after shipwreck, their triumph after battle; and all the ways of the Lord while passing through this wilderness, which were to his people mercy and truth.

“Never did angels taste above  
Redeeming grace, and dying love.”

John, therefore, in the vision, saw the saints nearer the throne than the angels. What are we to think of the state of blessedness, that is intended to display the value of that blood which purchased it—the blood of God: that blessedness which is designed to show in the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us by Jesus Christ; that blessedness which exhausts all the world of nature in furnishing images to express it; that blessedness which, after all, the Scriptures have told us concerning it, is glory that is *to be* revealed. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” We will not, therefore, darken counsel with words without knowledge; but we will confine our attention at present, entirely to two things concerning the inheritance mentioned by the Apostle—the one regarding the possessors, and the other the region in which they are to enjoy it.

The first regards *the possessors*: it is “the inheritance of *the saints*.” (Mind this—“the inheritance of *the saints*.”) This, you know, is a term, abused and ridiculed by many, but it is the language of the Scriptures, and “God is not mocked.” The word simply means holy beings. Of such importance is the possession of this attribute, that we are assured “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” The design of the Gospel is to make us holy; because we are not such by nature; we are not born such, but “born again” such. Therefore says the Apostle, “*called to be saints*.” And this will apply to the external call by the Word, and to the internal call by the Spirit; the one requiring the thing, the other producing it.

All the people of God therefore, are to be considered as saints—the holy beings who are partakers of God’s holiness now: they love holiness, but then they are not completely holy; at present they are encompassed with infirmities: they “groan” therefore “being burdened.” But it will be otherwise at death: *then* they will drop all their imperfections; *then* they will join the spirits of just men made perfect; *then* they will be presented faultless before the throne of God; *then* they will be as innocent as Adam in paradise—as holy as the Son of God himself. For though “it doth not yet appear what we shall be,” we

know that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The Apostle notices the region in which the inheritance is to be enjoyed: "the inheritance of the saints *in light*." Hell is darkness—outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. The world is darkness: therefore our deliverance from it is represented as being called "out of darkness into marvellous light." But the Church is light; all the members are children of the light and of the day; they are not of the night, nor of the darkness. And yet, while they are here, they are able only to survey the dawning and glimmering of the day. *Now* they walk by faith, not by sight. *Now*, "who can understand his errors?" *Now*, how often do we mistake appearances for realities? *Now*, how often does evil cheat us under the notion of good! *Now*, how often are we baffled in our inquiries, turn we which way we choose, in order to move on? *Now*, what is conjecture but a thorny maze? *Now*, what aid can we derive from the counsel and advice of others? *Now*, how unable are we to discern our own privileges; and what distress arises from doubts and fears? *Now*, how frequently we mistake our best friends for our enemies; and charge God with foolishness and unkindness, while his wisdom and his goodness are peculiarly at work to advance our happiness. Will it be always so? Oh no!

"There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign;  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain."

*There* shall we see as we are seen—know as we are known. *There*, says the Christian—

"There shall I see, and hear, and know,  
All I desired and wish'd below."

This is "the inheritance of the saints in light." And heaven is light—*all* light; there is no darkness at all; perfect light, endless light. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw her shining: for God shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.

In the mean time, remember, that there is a relation between the present and the future. Having noticed the *inheritance*, we will now proceed to notice **THE MEETNESS FOR IT**. "Who hath made us *meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?"

In order to take a correct view of the condition of a fallen sinner, it is necessary to remember he is both guilty and depraved: and therefore, in order to his restoration, two things are necessary—justification and sanctification: and though these are always inseparable, they are always clearly distinguishable. One of these delivers us from the condemnation of the law; the other brings us into communion with God. The one is a personal change; the other is a relative change. The one is a change of our state; the other is a change of our nature. The one is derived from the righteousness of Christ; the other is derived from the Spirit of Christ. The one is instantaneous in its accomplishment; the

other is gradual in its advancement. The one gives us a title to the inheritance the other gives **us** the meetness for it.

And this is the thing we must now notice; remarking, in the first place, *the nature of it*. This meetness consists, in what the Scripture calls the renewing of the Holy Ghost; giving us new views, principles and inclinations, and gendering in us heavenly habitudes. How is a man made meet for any earthly station? Take a youth: how is a youth to be made meet for any line of business in which he is to move? He is apprenticed; he goes through it; he begins with the elementary parts, and rises from the more easy to the more difficult, till he reaches the knowledge of the whole, and then launches away for himself. How does a child learn to walk? By walking. How does a musician learn to play? By playing: and he who now commands the finest and boldest notes at first touched the instrument with an inaccurate and timid hand.

How then are we made meet for heaven? I answer, by doing the work of heaven, and by enjoying the pleasures of heaven now—being drawn, as it were, through heaven now, in its lower parts. What is the work of heaven? It is to praise and serve God. Christians are praising and serving God now. What is the happiness of heaven? It is to see his face, and to hold communion with him. Christians see him, and commune with him now. All adventitious circumstances are there done away with for ever; and no distinctions are found there, but those which have resulted from character. If then I am made meet, it is obvious I must begin to rise above these adventitious distinctions, and that I shall learn to regard my fellow-creatures according to their real, their religious worth; that in my eyes a vile person will be condemned, however high, and that I shall honour them who fear the Lord, however low. All religious distinctions will then be done away for ever. No inquiry will there be made *where* you have worshipped, but only *how*; not to what denomination you belonged, but whether you worshipped God in the Spirit, and had no confidence in the flesh.

It is obvious, if I am made meet for such a state, I must be rising above these distinctions *already*, and be ready to say with the Apostle, "Grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." I must be ready *now* to stretch forth my hand towards his disciples, and say, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Can a bigot be made meet for such a state? As soon as he entered he would be looking for a steeple or a meeting-house, and would be disposed to turn his back on those who did not belong to his little party. And be it remembered, that to whatever party he belonged in this world, that party must be very small indeed, compared with "the multitudes which no man can number," gathered out of all kindreds, and nations, and people, and tongues. Can such feelings enter heaven? Impossible. Can the possessor of them enter? Yes, by becoming a new creature.

Then let us, secondly, notice *its necessity*. And what is there that does not require preparation for it? You commonly suppose that your trials require preparation; and therefore you come to us, with long faces, and beg that we would pray you may be prepared for your trials. Why don't you come to us, also and beg that we would pray that you may be prepared for your comforts? Is not prosperity as dangerous, at least as adversity? A man suddenly gains



a fortune, for which he was not qualified. What is the consequence? He falls into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. "The prosperity of fools destroys them." The French living so long under tyranny, were not prepared for the sudden enjoyment of liberty, and therefore, you know, they ran mad. The higher the destination a man has in view, the more necessity is there for a meetness for it. This is the case with a prince; this is the case with a minister. And Christians are exalted to both these dignities; they are made kings and priests unto God; and can this require no meetness? A man raised from a low condition, and placed immediately in a higher one, only exposes himself to ridicule, and can enjoy nothing from want of fitness for it. All aptitude is the relation of two things to each other, by which they approximate, and touch, and unite. It is obvious that a man under the influence of bodily disease, cannot enjoy the pleasures of the healthful: it is undeniable that a man who has no ear for music, will hear either with irksomeness or indifference any melody or harmony. The pleasures of temperance have no charms, you may be assured, for the drunkard. God, therefore, does not exclude you as unregenerate from heaven: this is a mistake of some people: you exclude yourselves. The impossibility does not arise from his decree, but from the very nature of things. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." If the devil, with his present malignity, could enter heaven, he would be a torment to himself there. Happiness does not (as you may well know, by attending to your feelings, and using that common sense in religion which you use in other things)—happiness does not arise merely from the excellences of the object, but from the faculty of being rightly suited to it. That makes you happy which meets your wants, which accomplishes your hopes, which affords gratification and indulgence—that is, from things which are congenial with your minds and all your feelings. Thus it is with regard to heaven; and so necessary is this meetness for it.

In the third place you will observe *the Author of it*. The Author of it is God. And the very operation shows this: as the Apostle finely remarks in another passage—"He that wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us his Holy Spirit." It is God's doing, and is "marvellous in our eyes." "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise"—not their own. If we are "a building," we are *his* workmanship: if we are fruitful, "in *him* is our fruit found:" *we* indeed bear it—*He* produces it. If we are trees, we are "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." And is there a Christian in this assembly who will be unwilling to acknowledge this, and ascribe to God the glory that is due to his holy Name? Who will not say, "Not unto us, not unto us; but by the grace of God, we are what we are: not we, but the grace of God which was in us."

Then, fourthly, we remark *the sureness of it, too*. "Oh," says the Apostle to his companions, "the thing is done; and it is done in us; know it is." He says, "We give thanks to the Father who *hath* made us meet." Now, there are many who will readily acknowledge that God is the Author of this meetness, who are afraid they are not the subjects of it: they fear frequently they have no part nor lot in the matter, and that their heart is not right with God. But the determination of the case—or what the Apostle calls "the full assurance of hope" unto the end—is *attainable*: and I need not say it is *desirable*; a

Christian *may* be destitute of the assurance—he *never* can be destitute of the desire, and therefore will be found upon his knees continually praying, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation ; and give me a token for good.”

Let us notice, thirdly, **THE PRAISE.** “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet.” Oh, how little is there of this to be found ! How much does our selfishness predominate, even in our religious exercises ! We are backward to all the engagements of religion ; we are backward enough to pray ; but, urged by our necessities, we must go to God for supplies ; but when we succeed, we forget the Giver. Is it not so ? Were there not ten lepers cleansed ; but where were the nine ? And how was it with good Hezekiah himself ? How had God appeared for him ! And he composed a song on the occasion, and said, “The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day : the Father to the children shall make known thy truth.” And yet what was after a while the consequence ? “Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him : for his heart was lifted up : therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah, and Jerusalem.” How much better was it with David, who said, “I will bless the Lord at all times ; his praise shall be continually in my mouth.” And that he does not enjoin upon others what he was regardless of himself, is obvious from his own address to his soul, after he had called upon all creatures to praise God : “Bless the Lord,” says he, “O my soul.” And though he resolved to “bless the Lord at all times,” and that his praise should “continually be in his mouth,” it was no more than he ought to have resolved to do : it was no more than what a Christian should always do. Whatever be his condition, gratitude is required ; whatever be his circumstances, he has more to be grateful for than to complain of. Events the most lowering and the most adverse to his wishes, may be yet the most necessary to himself. Have you forgotten the Poet who said,

“ In all my list of blessings infinite,  
Be this the foremost—that my heart has bled.”

Have you forgotten the saint who said, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted ?”

Take we four views of this gratitude, and conclude.

First, you will observe, it is *deserved*. There is not a person here this morning who will call this in question, who reflects upon his short-comings and unprofitableness since he has known God, or rather, has been known of God. Surely you feel your unworthiness to such a degree as to induce you to say with Jacob, “I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant.” Then when you come to reflect on his remembering you in your low estate ; of his giving his Son for you, and giving his Spirit to you ; of his redeeming your souls from the lowest hell—of his conducting you to the highest heaven ; that he hath quickened you when dead in trespasses and in sins, has forgiven you all your trespasses, and has admitted you into a state of holy intimacy ; so that, by his grace, you stand “rejoicing in hope of the glory of God :” must you not acknowledge that he has infinite claims upon your gratitude ? That, if you feel the kindness which is

shown you by any of your fellow creatures, how much more alive should you be to the claims of this Infinite Being!

This gratitude, in the second place, is *distinguishing*. Your state (I wish you would remember this)—your state is to be discovered by your estimation. In a thousand things this estimation may be known by us: therefore do not pretend to be *ignorant*. For instance: are you afflicted as much by your trouble as you are by your sins? You are not, if you are real Christians: you may feel your trouble much, but you will feel your sin more, and more mourn over it. Then as to your anxiety—what is it? Is it for any worldly good? or is it for the light of God's countenance? Is your language, with the natural man—"What shall I eat? what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" only and principally. Or with Paul, "That I may win Christ, and be found in him?" What is it that at any time will most easily and powerfully excite your gratitude? The natural man, if ever he is moved to thankfulness, (for he cannot rise higher than this principle) is so moved by a fine harvest, or a safe journey, or a prosperous voyage, or from some outward temporal good. Now, we do not mean to intimate you should overlook these, or that *Christians will* overlook these; but we only say, these will not *principally* draw forth his gratitude. He will say with the Apostle, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." He will not *principally* bless God that his grounds bring forth plenteously, but that he has a plenty of the means of grace,\* and that he is "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places:" not that he has *bodily* health, but that he has *soul* prosperity: not that he has freedom, but that he is made free *indeed*: not that he has treasure on earth, but that he has in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Thirdly, this gratitude is *practical*. It will be so if you are sensible of that obligation which you are never able to discharge. With regard to the love of God, as well as the love of man, the language of the Apostle should be remembered: "Let us not live in word and in tongue; but in deed and in truth." David therefore says, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living: I will show forth all his praise." Therefore, says God, by David, "He that offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show my salvation." Upon which Philip Henry observes that, "though thanks-giving be good, thanks-living is much better." If a tree had a capacity, and wished to praise the husbandman, you know the only way in which it could do it would be, by the excellence and the abundance of the fruit it produced to him: "And herein," says the Saviour, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Thus, according to the well-known language of the Liturgy, you should be concerned to "show forth his praise, not only with your *lips*, but with your *lives*; by giving up yourselves to his service, and by walking before him in holiness and righteousness *all your days*."

For, lastly, this gratitude is to be *never ending*. Ah, Christians! you will soon have done—some of you especially—with many things here. You will soon have done with sorrow; you will soon have done with sin; you will soon have done with a wicked world *without* you, and a wicked heart *within* you; you will soon have done even with some parts of your Christian experiences and exercises. Faith will soon be lost in sight; hope will soon be lost in

fruition. There will be no need of patience where there is nothing to be endured, and nothing to be waited for. But as to *thanksgiving and praise*, though you will change your place, you will never change your employment, unless for higher and nobler strains. They that dwell in his house above, will be still praising him. And therefore, Christian, you may retire and sing alone what you have already been singing : you may say, "My waiting days, my watching days, my warring days, and my weeping days—and even my praying days, (though I have loved the throne of grace)—my praying days, too, will soon be past ; but

" My days of *praise* shall *ne'er* be past  
While life, or breath, or being last,  
On *immortality* endures."



## THE FOUNDATION OF THE BELIEVER'S HOPE, AND THE COMPASS OF HIS PRIVILEGES.

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PORTMAN CHAPEL, BAKER STREET, SEPTEMBER 28, 1834\*.

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“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”  
ACTS, xx. 32.

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It was one of the most interesting occasions, one of the most interesting eras in the Apostle's whole ministerial life, when from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called together the elders of the Churches. We may suppose, with some very learned and very wise commentators, that the whole Church was included; that they came with their officers; and that the Apostle addressed them together.

He first appeals to his own manner of life amongst them: “Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews.” So that he was preaching to them, not only by the power and eloquence of the Word wherewith God had gifted him, but he was preaching to them by the still more efficacious eloquence of a holy, consistent, and devout life. He testifies of the faithfulness of his preaching: “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.” And again, he calls them as his witnesses: “I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” So that you see, he did not cater to their prejudices; he did not pare away, he did not explain away the offensive doctrines of the Gospel, but he ministered unto them that which the Lord Jesus had committed to his hands.

Then he gives them a word of exhortation: “Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” If there be a matter, which would be bound with more especial interest upon the heart of a departing minister, it would be the consideration of the hands into which his flock should fall; and he would desire to commit this to them, as a matter to be bound upon their consciences, and for which they shall answer at the great day: that he should minister to his poor flock in the wilderness, of the same food which they have been accustomed to receive.

\* Farewell Sermon, as Evening Lecturer.

These were times of great peril ; he adds, " I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And so it is in our own times, the enemies of the Church of Christ, are they of her own household. Well, therefore, might I add to you, dear brethren, the closing admonition, " Therefore watch ;" let each one walk warily, lest he be turned aside from the simplicity of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then he commits them unto one mighty Keeper : in the words of the text, he commends them " unto God, and to the word of his grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among all them which were sanctified."

Now we think that these words may not be altogether unsuitable to the specialty of the occasion of our gathering ourselves together this night. The ministry of Paul had been greatly blessed among the Ephesians : he found them sunk into the debasing depths of idolatrous worship : they were bowing down—high-minded creatures as they believed themselves, in their metropolis of luxury and knowledge—to the works of their own hands. And Paul preached Jesus Christ to them. And though at first they would have silenced him with their senseless yells, in praise of their own goddess, yet, ere Paul left them, he had the satisfaction of building up a Church : for he points to those who were once without God, without Christ, without hope in the world, aliens from the covenant of promise, outcasts, hopelessly wretched, brought to the enjoyment of the citizenship of God's spiritual Israel. And so, dear friends, might we hope, in closing our ministry amongst you, that there are some, at least, to whom this matter shall come with a specialty of application—that there are some, at least, among you, who have cast down your idols, and are no more rendering them your service, and your heart's affection ; who have been brought within the compass of the holy city ; who are now the people of the Lord ; who are bound unto Him, who is the great head of the Church.

Now, in choosing this as our parting topic, there are two points which I would desire especially to bring before you. In the first place, I would speak to you of the foundation of the believer's hope—" God and the word of his grace:" and, in the second place, of the compass of the believer's privileges—present edification, and future glory.

Now, as to the first head of our discourse, **THE FOUNDATION OF THE BELIEVER'S HOPE**—" God and the word of his grace." No truth can be more palpable, or more undeniable, than that all creation is dependant upon God. He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness. If he were to withhold his care, or to cause his bounty to cease, even for one hour, there would be desolation and death spread through all the provinces of God's creation. There is not that spot, dim and distant in its unconceived remoteness, but there is a constant dependance upon God ; and there walks not on this, his wide territory, one single creature, who can arrogate to himself that he is independent of the hand that formed him. There is not one, forming even the remotest link in the chain of animate nature, which exists, from moment to moment, but by the supplies that are ministered by Him, who at first gave existence. So that if God were for one moment to lift off his sleepless eye ; if

he were for one instant to turn aside his ministering hand—then would there be a stillness and destruction through all his wide domain.

Now it is, indeed, a matter of most blessed contemplation to the unfallen ones, to the elect angels which are around the throne of God—to those who have been brought back out of their sinful state, and are united to him—it is to them a subject of blessed consolation, to see how there is an entire dependance upon God. And ere sin came into the universe; ere the defiling step came into Paradise; ere the trail of the serpent was over all, it was fair, and beautiful, and holy. Then it was to man, also, a subject of delightful contemplation; for the whole creation, in the midst of which he dwelt, was as one outspread mirror, wherein the character of God was reflected: he saw his goodness; he saw his power; he saw his wisdom—the wisdom that had contrived, and the resistless power that had executed, and the goodness which was ever sustaining. And when man dwelt in the midst of all creation, the brightest and the best; and when her bounties were profusely poured out at his feet; and when his path was, as it were, *heaped up* with the benevolence of his God; it was his very joy to render up the loyalty, and the obedience, and the undivided affection of his heart, to one whose character was so consonant with his own. For, you mark, that ere sin came to defile and to deform, man was the very transcript of his Maker; and there was impressed upon him, as from a clear, and exact, and precise mould, that which the Lord himself was: it was, so to speak, Deity which took in the earthly image; it was the manifestation of God in the sight of an admiring creation.

But when sin came, when there was apostacy in this world, there could no longer be any satisfaction in contemplating this dependance upon God; for then all the attributes were included together to crush and to destroy; then, wisdom, and power, and goodness, might shine forth in all their brightness, and in all their beauty, for those who had never transgressed; but man—ruined and wretched man—could find no joy in their aspect. And then it came to pass, that the only comfort that there could be for the ruined heart, was to see God as the God of grace. Now of this nature could tell nothing; of this Providence could tell absolutely nothing. Man might pore upon the page of the one, and on the page of the other, but he could learn nothing to bring comfort to his desolate heart. He might see what God had formed in the building of the world around him, and how God was sustaining them; but they could not tell him one word of the power of restoration: he would not see in this outspread universe, around him or beneath him, aught that would bring consolation to his sin-burdened soul. This was a matter of pure revelation; it was not by any exercise of a mighty and profound intellect; it was not by the going forth into the depths of nature's laboratory, that man could fetch forth the knowledge of that which he was to be in his restored condition: it was a voice from another world, a voice from God himself, which was to tell him that there was grace, and that there was peace and hope for the redeemed and pardoned soul. But on the page of his own blessed Book, upon the page of his own blessed Bible—his gift, his grateful gift to man—we read what grace has done; so that the whole Bible teems with this one topic. And the ministers of Christ, who go forth, fetching in their stores from that his own book, will take this as their one unfailing subject. It is indeed the very epitome of the Divine character; it is

indeed the very life of the soul ; it is that which sustains the angels around the throne of God ; it is that which is the daily food of all his weak, tried, tearful, saints upon earth.

And then, the unfolding of this blessed plan is at once the employment of his ministering servants, and the consolation of those whom the Lord sends to be fed at their hands. We see how it was that *grace* first contrived the means of man's restoration ; there is no other conceivable motive which could have actuated the mind of Deity. If God had suffered his uncurbed wrath to be let loose upon the world ; if he had caused the light of this far-off planet to be extinguished for ever ; if he had expunged it from the catalogue of existence, his glory would not have been diminished. Nay, we may say more than this ; if heaven itself were depopulated, and all the harps of the blessed were silenced ; still God could, by a word of his own, raise up new objects for his bounty, and open new channels for his benevolence to flow through. It was grace that moved him to save, as it is grace that moves him still to uphold the unfallen around his throne. And as it was grace which caused him to yearn over this outcast portion of his creation, when it was lying in all its wretchedness, and in all its ruin, when there was no eye to pity, and no hand to help, even so does grace direct the Lord to the objects whom he shall bless with his bounty, and whom he shall glorify with their rich inheritance—of all those who have served the Lord in his Church upon earth, and who are now walking in the strait and narrow way, gladdened by the beams of their Father's countenance, and rejoicing under the holy influences of his Spirit, of all those who are now gladdened in their Father's house, there was not one by nature who had ought to recommend him to God : they were all alienated, and in a far-off state. They were all like the Prodigal ; they had ungratefully left their Father's house, and would rather feed upon the husks that the swine might devour, than they would remain in the comforts of his family circle, and feed upon the bread which he had furnished.

Oh, how Jesus testified the magnitude of grace, when he commanded his Apostles *first* to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem ; though that had been the very place where his prophets were slain, where their blood was crying for vengeance, where his own mercy had been outraged, and his love trampled under foot ; yet even there were they to *begin* their mission of mercy. They might have to meet the very person who directed the spear against the Saviour's side, and yet they might say to him, "The water and the blood that flowed from that wound shall cleanse thee, and shall heal thee, and restore thee, and reconcile thee unto God." They might meet the man whose fingers had woven the thorny crown that was pressed down on the brow of Jesus, and yet they had full authority to say to him, "There shall be for you, sin-stained as you are, a diadem of eternal glory, which Jesus shall give you." They might find the man who had cast the purple robe around the shoulders of the persecuted, crushed, and disgraced Saviour, yet even to such an one they might say, "There has been woven for you a robe of glory ; there has been woven for you the white robe of the Saviour's righteousness, that you may wear for ever ; wherein no spot, no stain of sin, no mark of defilement, shall ever be seen."

And, think you, dear friends, that there is less of authority given to the servants of the sanctuary now ? Oh no ; we come down amongst you, with our messages of mercy, even to the most outcast ones, even to the man or the



woman whose conscience bears the loudest testimony of sin ; and we may say, Though you should have been vile as Magdalene, though you should have been as polluted with blood as Paul, yea, even for you there is, if you will receive it, mercy. And all our consolation is, that all our mercies come from one, who, in the blessed language of our text, “*is able*,” they come from one who is “*mighty to save* ;” beyond the limits of whose power no difficulty can possibly arise. Oh, when we contrast this with human helps, how does our heart joy ; how is our spirit gladdened to know that we cannot be disappointed. We do not now speak of the fickleness of human hearts ; we do not now speak of the alienation of human affections ; but we speak of the powerlessness of man. There might be in those who have professed kindness for us, an unailing and unchanging stream of tenderness ; though we believe indeed that this earth’s affection is but too like the summer shower, it is dry when we need its refreshment the most ; but if it were not so, if there were one who would stand beside us in the day of broken and shattered fortunes, who would come into our chamber of desolation and sickness, who would stand by our dying beds, and who, in the chivalry of their affection, feel that they could die to save us, yet they leave on our hearts the cold impression, that they cannot, though they would, help us. But to know that God is able to save unto the uttermost those who come unto him !

And herein we see the faithfulness of the Apostle Paul ; he did not suffer the faith of his people to stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. Though he was gifted as no other minister ever was gifted ; though he was furnished for the warfare as no other warrior has been sent out from the camp of Christ ; yet we find in the humility of his heart, he referred his people simply to his Master. And it is our joy to know, that this power of omnipotence, which is able to compass all its designs, and to carry them forward, regardless of hindrance or obstruction, to their completion, is linked with perfect love. Almighty power, without love, would be a tremendous thing. We cannot conceive of the human character to which we dare trust illimitable power ; power that was uncontrolled : but in the hands of God, his power is joined with his love ; such melting tenderness as no human records of human affection will furnish us with the means of conceiving. We might take all that is most touching in human tenderness ; and all that is the most noble and disinterested in human doing ; but it would not enable us, in the faintest degree, to conceive of the love of God, which is there united with his irresistible power. We might take the love that the patriot bears to the country that gave him birth ; of the friend with whom we have walked hand in hand, through the pathways of this world ;—we might take the most touching instance of human affection, the love that the mother bears for the babe that she has nursed and watched over in its season of helplessness ;—and these cannot represent unto us, in the remotest degree, that love of the Father which so pitied us, even when we were rebels, even when we were outcasts, even when we were defying his power, and despising his regard. No ; we must wait until we have left the flesh ; until the dimness of the mist, and the veil of mortality, are all torn from our view ; and we shall see, not as now, darkly, but face to face ; when we shall know, not as now, in part, but even as we are known. But, meanwhile, this is our joy, that God is to us a God of grace : and in bringing his people to himself he uses his Word as the

instrument. It is not only the record of his grace, but at the same time, it is the instrument of his grace. It is by his word, faithfully administered, honestly and unflinchingly preached to his people, that sinners are converted; it is by the ministration which has the word of God's grace for its foundation, that men are gathered in from darkness to light, from the kingdom of the devil to the kingdom of Jesus; it is by the word of his grace that many a soul has been first awakened; it is by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that many souls have been prepared for the long conflict with besetting foes and besetting sins; it is by the word of his grace that God furnishes his people for resistance to the many temptations that are around them. Are they in perplexity? Does their troubled path lie through deep darkness? Then the Word is a light unto their feet, and a lantern unto their path. Is there a new rush of sorrows on their souls, so that they lie almost overwhelmed and crushed? The Word of God tells them, that "though heaviness may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning;" and fetching, in their reach, deep consolation from the word of God's grace, they are enabled to say, "We will fear no evil, thy rod and thy staff, O Lord, they comfort us." Here can they lean: upon the precious promises of their God they will depend; and though they pass through deep waters they are not overwhelmed; though they go through the furnace of fire, they are not destroyed.

Now we pass on, as we proposed, to consider, in the second place, **THE COMPASS OF THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGES**;—present edification, and future glory. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." There will be in the history of every believer, the marks, the process, the definite and observable marks, of a *progress* in divine things. And I would say to you, dear Christian people, that you may well suspect yourselves, if you do not find these marks of advancement written on your lives. There must be advancement in *knowledge*. Now when the young Christian first learns to turn away from the world that hath deceived him, to turn away from hopes that have failed him, to turn to the Saviour, whose love he has just begun to appreciate, his views may be clouded and contracted, and obscure; and as he proceeds he will be enabled to perceive more of the simple truths of the Gospel: he will see that human righteousness is as nothing in the great matter of reconciliation with God; that the sole dependance must be upon the Rock of Ages. Though once he came, like Nicodemus, to sit at Jesus's feet, and be taught as a humble disciple; and yet, if he had expressed the language of his heart, he would have said, "How can these things be?" By and bye his prejudices are gone, his objections vanish; he is content to receive God's mercy on his own terms: he is content to see, that man is nothing, and God is all; he is content to see the sinner laid low in the dust, and the Saviour exalted.

But there must be no dissevering of correct opinion from the holiness of life. It is a most disastrous thing when we arrive at correctness in our religious views, and at the same time the current of our daily life shall run on much in the same channel as before, and they who take daily observance of us should see, that we are in no respect changed persons. Now it is possible for a man to be a most correct theologian; to maintain nothing that may be antiscriptural, nothing

which may not be based upon the Word of God; and yet in all the lines of his character, and in all the features of his daily life, he may give the evidence of being an unrenewed and unregenerate person. It is very possible that he may hang on the lips of his favourite minister, that he may delight in public ordinances, that he may seem to wear the garb of Canaan, and to speak the language of the land of promise, at the very time that he has not taken one step of advancement towards its border. We can very readily conceive how a man should have set himself to learn the tongue of some distant people; we can very readily conceive how a man may have spent years in preparing himself for a journey, and in the quietness of his own house might have spent his leisure time in making preparation for this long travel that was before him; and yet he might go down to his grave, and never have left his own door; and he might never have advanced one single step on the way to that blessed land, the land of which he had read, by travellers who have entered it, and of whose glory he often loved to speak. And so it is with us: there are many among us who are not content to wage an unceasing war on the theatre of their own hearts; who are not content to bear the strife that must be borne with besetting sins. We would ask these—though there be the life, though there be the blossom, though there be the bud—where is the *fruit* borne to the honour of their Master? Are they, by silent holiness of life, by consistency of conduct, by the victory obtained, day by day, over themselves and over temptation, are they commending the Gospel to others? If not, then with all faithfulness, and with all affection, would we say to such persons, they are deceiving their own souls, they are not built up upon the foundation of Jesus. And yet edification is the believer's privilege; to be "built up" is the promise which the Father has made to him: it is his preparation. Oh yes; we are here but in the childhood of our being; by and bye the Spirit is to be developed in its larger and more magnificent manifestation. The Lord hath prepared for his people something beyond this world: that never, never can be the *home* of the immortal. This earth, when it is the most blessed that human experience hath ever found, cannot be the resting-place of those who were made for eternity. Now we know how a kind father labours for his children's sustenance; he delights to spend his strength, day by day, for the comfort and enjoyment of those he loves. We know that he does not bound his provision just for the period when he is ministering to them; but he prepares a *future* inheritance for them. Oh, it is a touching and beautiful sight, it is one of the first moral exhibitions which this world furnishes, when we see the father and mother of a family practising a large measure of self-denial, grudging that which they might enjoy themselves, to spare it for the inheritance of their children; and so they can toil on, rising early, and going late to rest, and eating the bread of carefulness, that they may leave a little more for their children. And when they come to die, when their heads are, for the last time, laid upon their pillow, this will be one of those anxieties of the present that will cling to their hearts—how they have provided for their children. Now this, I am quite sure, is the experience of a great many among you. Do you believe that God is a less tender Father to his people, than you are to your dear and precious children? Do you believe that you can possibly spend, I say not more, but as much, care on the provision that you are making for your little ones, as God shall make for those whom he hath

loved with an eternal affection? He has provided an inheritance above, not like those of this earth; for we may be painfully and carefully gathering much for our children, which may be dissipated by sensuality and extravagance: but God has provided for his people an inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, and which is reserved in heaven for them: it is among those that are sanctified.

Now, if we want, in one word, to tell you what heaven is, we would say it is a place of perfect holiness. Why is the world not a blessed place? Because it is cursed with sin. And why is heaven a blessed place? Because sin hath never placed its foot-print there; because defilement and evil has never been, and never shall be there; because God being the centre of holiness, there are lines converging from the whole compass of his glorious existence, that shall meet and end there; because there are no tempters; because there are no assaults; because there are no indwelling foes. Now, for this inheritance, the Lord is preparing his people, and he has told them that they are *kept* for it; so that there is a mutual relation between what the believer is, and what he shall possess. And so he feels, with gladdened and bounding heart, that here his possession is laid up; and that where his treasure is garnered, that there his heart shall be too. And though he is now but a poor, weak, fainting pilgrim, he knows that he has the citizenship of the high and holy city; and that when a few more hours are passed, these, as steps, shall bring him to that city's gate; and mercy shall enclose him, and grace shall fling wide its arms; and there shall he be, a blessed and holy creature for ever.

We live far below our privileges; we are defrauding our own souls, and cheating our own selves. God intends, that all his people shall be in the perpetual enjoyment of these blessings; and if we are not—if we cannot so rest upon what our Father has prepared for us—it is not because of the uncertainty of the inheritance, but it is because of the evil heart of unbelief; it is because there lingers within us somewhat of the condemnation and sin of faithlessness. If we believed heaven were as blessed as our imagination could depict, or our tongue describe, and that hell were as terrible as our alarm seems to declare; oh we could not rest; we should not be able to sleep upon our pillow, doubtful whether in the one or in the other, should be our everlasting home. Therefore, when men say, they cannot receive this doctrine of assurance for a truth, it is because of the evil heart of unbelief: you will not believe what your fathers have testified, because you are under the influence of an evil heart of unbelief. Now the advanced believer is able to lay hold of these things; it is his constant comfort, and unvarying consolation, in the midst of the business of life, and in the midst of its enjoyments, that mostly engross and occupy so much of his time and thoughts; it gladdens him to know that there is a place, and that there he shall dwell, where the sole business of its inhabitants is to praise the Lord that bought them. And when the pleasures—the permitted and lawful pleasures—of life beguile and refresh him for a while upon his weary way, oh, he turns from these, though they may have lawfully refreshed him for a while, and he thinks of Him, even his own reconciled Father, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. And when the affections of home, and of the dearest friends are clinging around his heart—though these be the joys which his Father hath given him, to gladden him on his way—he thinks of that home



where everlasting love is the very atmosphere: that he is to be brought, where love, divine love, shall be the very element of his whole existence for ever

Now of those who are now living amongst all mankind; of the aggregated mass of human creatures that now tenant, that ever have tenanted, or that ever shall tenant, this earth, there can be but two classes—those who have an eternal interest in these things, and those whom they concern not. We can divide this thronging congregation into but these two classes; we can speak of you but as those who are servants of God, and those who are servants of the world, and enemies of truth. And if there be some halting between two opinions, who are afraid to come forth to the enjoyment of the light and liberty which God gives his people, and who therefore have to own, like Israel of old, they come out in a state of sin from Egypt—but they did not all enter Canaan; remember how many of them fell in the desert; how many of them left their bones to blanch in the wilderness:—now, my dear friends, we tell you, you are in the wilderness state; press forward, I pray you, for Christ's sake and your own, for establishment in the land of promise.

Oh, my brethren, we have desired, with whatever power God may have given to us, to press upon your hearts the importance of these things. And now we have come to the close of our ministry amongst you here. You have met together this night from various dwellings: some from the sumptuous and palace-like houses, and some from the homes of pinching poverty: but to the rich and to the poor, to the great and the ignoble, we have but one message; we have but to tell you, that by nature you are sinners, defiled and ruined, and hopeless in your guilt; and unless Jesus come, with the all-cleansing power of his blood, and reconcile you to God, and take you to himself, you cannot be saved.

Now we do not think it necessary to offer a single apology for the faithful speaking of days past. What though some may have called it *harsh* speaking; it has only been from love to you. If I saw any one of you lying upon your bed of pain, and racking agony in every limb, the lip white with anguish, and the death-damp standing upon your brow, and I knew that I could minister a remedy that should raise you up again, and give you vigour in the limb, and health in the cheek; and I was to withhold and keep back from you the knowledge of your danger, and neglect to administer the remedy, would you not say I had dealt cruelly unto you? But not so cruelly as the minister would deal with you who would keep back from you the knowledge of that disease which would bring you to everlasting death. Once again I tell you, there is the disease of sin in every unrenewed, and in every carnal and unregenerate heart; and that if it continue, it will issue in death eternal. Now it is in the tenderness of Christian love that I so speak to you: that I do love you, God, the Searcher of all hearts, is my witness. And in truth I must have a heart of stony hardness if I do not love you; for before I could forget your kindness, your undeserved affectionateness and sympathy, I must have forgotten all earthly things, and the pulse of my affection must have ceased to beat for aught that is in this world.

And therefore, when I speak to you *once*, and once in this place only, where I have spoken before many times, I cannot but remember that God has blessed my ministry in this place; and that there is cause for deep thankfulness in knowing, that there are those amongst you—not one, not two, but there are *many* amongst you—who have borne your testimony, that the preached word in

this place, has been God's instrument for healing your souls ; for snatching them out of the enemies' hands, and giving them, as a precious deposit, into the hands of Jesus ; when I remember that *many* a one (I speak advisedly) has been brought from the slavery of sin, from serving the devil, and the vanities of the world, to live the Christian life, and present a Christian pattern to others, I cannot but deeply feel the solemnity of this occasion. I do not anticipate, I would not anticipate, the bitter sorrow of heart, of hearing that you had turned back from the way wherein you have taken your first step ; I would rather hear that your bright and blooming hope was quenched in the grave's darkness ; I would rather weep over your tombs than over your apostacy.

Many of us, my brethren, in all probability, will never meet again in this world. Some of us, I trust, will meet beneath the roof of another sanctuary, will come together in another house of prayer, by the next Sabbath : but some of you I shall perhaps never see on earth again ; some of you I shall perhaps never look upon, until we meet before the great white throne, and before the presence of the Judge. Oh, my brethren, then, when the sea shall give up her dead, when from the mountains and the valleys, from the thronged city and from the lonely desert, there shall come forth a mighty multitude to be judged ; when the sepulchred dust shall arise from millions of graves, and be shapen again into the ancient forms and lineaments of living men, and when this mighty stream shall rush forward to receive the sentence of joy or of sorrow, then, oh then, we must meet ; and then, oh then, will come the separation at the bar of judgment.

Now conceive of the feelings on the one hand, and the feelings on the other. On the one hand there shall be hearts which beat high with the transports of anticipated joy ; there shall be those whose ear already catches the sound of the song of the redeemed ; those to whose refreshed and gladdened spirits, there shall float the air that breathes from the land of the blessed ; whose spirits will float into regions of loveliness and light, into which imagination never soared. But there shall be another class, made up of those whose hearts are filled with fear, whose eye looks forward with despair, whose cheek is pale with anticipated vengeance. No, there will be no careless ones at that time ; the terror of the wicked will be—not that the hurricane of divine wrath is rushing out upon them and the world ; not that creation has arrived at its last moment—but that the Judge *looks* upon them : that calm look ; that piercing eye, that shall mark out the faithless and the fallen, the worldling and the hypocrite. Oh, then, such—and I pray God there be not such amongst you—but if there be such, then I tell you, that these efforts of mine will rise to your remembrance ; these sermons you have heard from my lips will be bound upon your consciences, and they shall enhance your condemnation.

Then shall there be no sympathy of pious relatives or friends ; for they shall fling off far from them every unworthy feeling, and God shall be all in all ; but it will compose, I believe, a part of the inconceivable torments of the condemned, that they shall be separated from those with whom they have associated in the converse of life ; that they shall be separated from them : for they are outcasts from that world where the beloved ones are going.

It may be that nature is in her old age ; it may be, that in spite of all the greenness upon earth's surface, and the tide of life which is in all its provinces,

that the shade of coming dissolution may be already cast over this world ; and that the knell of its entombment shall soon be rung. We do not know whether this is the case ; but of this we are quite sure, that the time for the dislocation and dissolution of the frame-work of this earthly tabernacle is not far distant. Whenever we have felt the chill of sickness sink to our heart, then was a warning that our own death-hour was not far off. Yes, the time shall come, when there shall be a stillness in your chambers, and when your relatives shall move slowly and noiselessly around you ; when you shall gather from their speaking looks, that there is no hope for you, that death is at hand.

Now, dear friends, we pray you to prepare for these things. We speak to you once more ; we bear once again the message of mercy to your ears ; may God send it home to your hearts. " We are ambassadors for God, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." There are amongst you those who have never cared for the Gospel of Jesus ; who have been reckless, and thoughtless, and careless, living according to the fashion of this world. Oh, we beseech you, by the mercies of the Living God, that ye live not thus any longer. We come to plead God's cause with you once more : to tell you of that love, that pardoning, pitying, and redeeming love, which would embrace you in its arms, and introduce you for ever to the realms of peace. Turn, then, unto Jesus ; pray God to pour out his Spirit into your hearts, that the rock may be smitten, and the gracious water may flow ; and that by and bye, when this world's administration shall be closed, and the records of time shall be ended, when the Archangel shall come, and when the flood of God's wrath shall rush forth ; you need not fear ; for on that flood there shall float the ark of the Gospel, and you shall walk through the black and troubled waters, and you shall repose in perfect safety. The tempest cannot reach you, and the water cannot overwhelm you, for you shall be under the care of Jesus. Oh, may that be the experience of every soul here present.

And now, brethren, I bid you farewell. Be strong ; be of good courage ; be of one mind, and live to Christ.

## THE CHRISTIAN HOPE AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL.

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“WHEN a vessel is at anchor, the sea may be dreadfully boisterous, the wind may blow, the tempest howl, and the waves heave; but if the ship be what they call sea-worthy, in a firm, stout condition, the cable sufficiently strong, and the anchor struck deep into tenacious soil beneath, though she be most terribly tost and buffeted about by the winds and the waves, yet she rides in security on the surface of the deep, the anchor is a stay to her, keeps her from driving among rocks, and striking upon quick-sands; if all be firm, and steady, and tight, she rides upon the storm, and outbraves the tempest, severe as it may be. With admirable propriety and aptness is this image made use of by the Apostle himself, in describing the actual operation and exercise of the Christian hope. The best, the most eminent, exemplary, and hopeful Christians, while they are here, in the world and in the body, find themselves by no means exempt from the common cares and evils of their fellow men; nor exempt from the peculiar tribulations of the Christian life; the struggles, the self-denials, the difficulties, the conflicts of the Christian warfare. They all find their great Lord’s prediction verified in one way or another; “In the world ye shall have tribulation:” they are in many cases, as it is Scripturally expressed, “tossed with tempests,” on the uncertain, turbulent, and changeful ocean of life. But the question is—In these circumstances, what do they actually find the Gospel hope to be to them? what is the essential end it answers to them? Does it still the storm as with a word? does it rebuke the winds and the waves, and, as by miracle or magic, produce instantaneously a great calm, as Christ did? No, in ordinary cases, it does not; in some very extraordinary ones, perhaps, it may have done so: in florid, high-wrought descriptions from the pulpit, by young inexperienced orators, it is sometimes represented as always doing so; but this certainly is not the ordinary experience of the most serious Christians; it was not the ordinary experience even of Apostles; “Troubled on every side; persecuted; cast down, as sorrowful, as poor, as having nothing,” is more frequently the language of their experience. But the ordinary operation of the Christian hope, is exactly that to the renewed mind which the anchor is to the vessel at sea; it is a stay and rest to it; it keeps the storm as it were at bay; it keeps the mind from being driven on temptation, despondency, and destruction: there is an humble, cheerful, consoling, supporting sense of security amidst all, in the promises, and consolations, and provisions of the everlasting covenant. In other words, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keepeth the heart and mind, through Christ Jesus.” It does not annihilate the cares, and conflicts, and troubles of life, nor ward off their influence altogether, but keeps the mind in some degree of security and serenity in the midst of all. Does not this just correspond with your experience, Christians? Your hope is not the actual accomplishment of every thing to you; you are not in the harbour; you have not reached the eternal shore; you have not actually entered into rest; you find yourselves at sea still; and sometimes tossed and agitated not a little; but your hope sticks by you as a fast and steady friend.”—REV. T. N. TOLLER.



## CONFIDENCE IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

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REV. J. E. BEAUMONT.

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“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”—PSALM, xxiii. 4.

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THE monarch of Israel had been taken from the obscurity and humbleness of a shepherd's life, to sit upon the throne of the kingdom: but he often reverted to his early condition, never being ashamed of it, never shrouding it over amid regal splendour and regal acts. The finest imagery of his fine writings, is taken, not so much from the subsequent parts of his life, his monarchical dignity, as from the early scenes of it, his shepherd life. And it is because David had this transition in his fortunes, from being a shepherd becoming a king, that no imagery, no figure is so often employed by poets, orators, and historians, in the description of the administration of any office, civil or ecclesiastical, as that of the shepherd; the administration of public affairs, whether secular or religious, is often held forth in writings, both sacred and profane, under the emblem of a shepherd's care. And there is no representation of the minister, of his duties, toils, anxieties, solitudes, so frequent in Scripture, as that of a shepherd. Nay, our Lord Jesus Christ himself is designated a Shepherd, but the *chief* Shepherd and Bishop of souls—the chief Shepherd to whom all the under shepherds must give up their account.

This is the image recorded by the Psalmist in the short beautiful Psalm from which we have taken the words of the text. It opens finely, boldly, richly: “The Lord is my Shepherd”—JEHOVAH is my Shepherd—“I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea”—says he, his feelings swelling, his soul expanding, his thoughts kindling, his language inflaming—“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Applying these words to our own improvement, I propose to notice, first, the solemn event anticipated by the Psalmist in this language—passing through the “valley of the shadow of death:” secondly, the confidence, the holy confidence, the complete confidence, which the Psalmist expresses in prospect of so solemn an event.

First, notice THE SOLEMN EVENT ANTICIPATED BY THE PSALMIST—Death. I know that some commentators tell us, the language of the text has no

reference to the last conflict, the mortal crisis, the final struggle: they tell us it is figurative language, as much of David's language is, and that it refers to mental anguish, to sore trouble. I know very well that the language before us is sometimes employed as expressive of deep distress, sore affliction, overwhelming calamity: like a sheep that has gone out of the fold, wandered amid the glens, and lost itself in some sequestered place: all around is solitude, and gloom, and awe; and the poor sheep is terrified with the darkness and the dreariness of the situation. In this view, Bunyan (our fine, inimitable allegorist) understood the language—not as a description of death, but of some sore trouble: and any one who reads the representation he has given of the valley of the shadow of death, will see that the man was painting from the life, and that he was delineating some of his own spiritual and mental troubles, and characterizing the gloom of mind that he experienced on account of them.

Allowing this, I am quite of opinion that the language of the text refers to death itself. It is not novel phraseology; it is often found in Scripture. To shew you that I proceed on good authority, I will refer you to language very much like that of the text, at the close of the tenth chapter of the book of Job: "Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." A more philosophical, pathetic description of death is not to be found than in these words of the patriarch. This is emphatically "a land of darkness and the shadow of death, without any order." Death is that which baffles all calculation; death is that which mocks all prognosis; death is that which ridicules all our reckoning. The conclusions of the moralist and of the physician are alike at fault here: we say, such a man is likely to live, and such a man is likely to die; and death mocks our notions, and takes the man we thought likely to live, and leaves the man we thought likely to die. It is "a land without any order."

The same language we have again in the twenty-fourth chapter of Job, where the Patriarch is describing the guilt of the man in quest of forbidden pleasure—the adulterer, for instance: "The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time: they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death."

Now, in this view of the shadow of death, I proceed to make some general remarks.

First, I remark, that *our descending to this valley is by various avenues*. We do not all go into the valley by the same avenue:

"Dangers stand thick thro' all the ground,  
To push us to the tomb;  
And fierce diseases wait around,  
To hurry mortals home."

But it is a comfort to the Christian to know that the particular avenue at which he shall enter the valley of the shadow of death is not left to chance, but is determined by the Shepherd, who is in the valley.

Secondly, let me remark that *into this valley of the shadow of death we must*

*descend.* "It is appointed to *all* men once to die." Whatever our present position, however remote we may seem from the valley, however unlikely our descent into it may appear, we *must* go down into "the valley of the shadow of death." The grave is "the house appointed for all living." there is no release from it in this world. You may be indifferent to your approach to the valley, nay, you may be altogether unconscious of it; you may dismiss the thought from your mind: and it is quite a possible thing, that if some of you had known what the preacher's subject was to be this evening, rather than encounter so melancholy a topic, you would have stayed away. I cannot help that: now you *are* here, I have to announce what is before us, and to tell you (may God send it home to your hearts!) that you *must* go down into the valley of the shadow of death, and encounter the king of terrors.

Thirdly, allow me to remind you, that *your descent into this valley may be much nearer than you are aware of.* Some of you may be at the mouth of the valley, already on the slope, and descending. It is quite lamentable to see how even men who have lived long, those who have lived many years—how indifferent they are to their latter end. One cannot but deplore that even the pious themselves seem so inattentive to the matter. The cares of life, our relationships, and engagements, seem to deaden our apprehensions of the solemn event. *Death*, we say, *is before the old man's face*; but it has been often tritely said, that *he is behind the young man's back.* In the grave-yard, you will find epitaphs of all scales, and graves of all lengths; only you will find far more epitaphs of short dates than of long dates—more short graves than long ones—more memorials of early deaths, than of those which have taken place in advanced life.

Fourthly, *our passage through the valley of the shadow of death must be made alone.* Our friends will not be with us; our relatives cannot accompany us. They go with us through the walks of life; they cheer us amid our pilgrimage to the grave; but they cannot die with us; we must enter the valley alone.

And *it is to be passed but once.* This it is which makes it so solemn an affair. Many of our transactions in life are done amiss; but then we discover that it is so, and we can correct them. Many things we do are done wrong, but we detect the impropriety, and in some future acts we may rectify the past mistakes. But there is no correction *here.* It is of the greatest moment, therefore, that you be prepared to go through the valley on safe principles, on right principles—that you make your transit through it on principles that will bear the investigation of eternity. Therefore as no traveller ever returned from this valley to correct his errors, and no one comes back from the land of darkness to instruct us, we ought to address ourselves seriously, solemnly, habitually, scripturally, to the work of preparation, for going through the valley of the shadow of death

The language of the text is **THE LANGUAGE OF CONFIDENCE.** "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." It is *a walking* through the valley; it is not a rushing into the valley. We are as much bound to take care of life, as to prepare for death. No more mischievous or fatal temptation can assail a man at any time. Life is God's gift, and life is to be attended and watched with all conceivable care: it is as much our Christian duty to maintain

it, and try to preserve it, as to prepare for death itself. How correct the language of the text! "Though I walk"—deliberately, cautiously, calmly, circumspectly; no rushing into the dark vale—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

Whence came this holy confidence? It is not natural to man to be so assured in prospect of his latter end: nature shrinks from it; it is not a welcome prospect. But here is a man expressing confidence in reference to it. He founds his confidence on two things:

The first is *his relationship to the Shepherd*. Religion is a personal thing; it is a concern of the heart; it is one's own concern. David had cultivated personal religion. We are not to trust to our ancestral connexions, to our religious parentage, to our having for our friends many pious people. The piety of my mother will not save me; the godliness of my elder sister will not save me. It may be a matter of much gratitude that I have many relatives who are pious; but this piety will be no substitute for my own. Is it not an attainable thing, a possible thing, not only to have an interest in the Shepherd's care, but to *know* that one has it? Why is it we are living in such uncertainty? Why is it even Christians move amid fogs and shadows into the grave itself? Why is it we have no language of certainty and confidence on the subject? Why is it the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Christian has not where to lay his head—all being uncertain, all afloat? It is not so with him who has the personal piety of the Psalmist. He says, "I will fear no evil, because the Lord is *my* shepherd."

It is no difficult matter, after all, to know whether one has an interest or not in the Shepherd's care, the Shepherd has left us so many distinctive marks and features of our interest in him. "My sheep," said he, "hear my voice." Do *you* hear the voice of Christ? Do *you* hear his voice speaking in his Word, in his providence, at his table? "My sheep hear my voice, and *they follow me*." Do *you* follow Christ? Is he your Master? Do you obey him? Is he your first and last—your Alpha and your Omega? Is he your life, your all? Is it difficult, then, with such distinctive marks as those, to ascertain whether we belong to Christ or not? "The Lord is my Shepherd." David very well recollected the relationship in which he had stood towards the sheep of his father Jesse: he well remembered the interest he took in the welfare of the flock. He tells us afterwards, that when the lion came he rescued the sheep from the teeth of the lion; and when the bear came, he rescued the lamb from the paw of the bear. David was a good shepherd to the flocks of his father, but he felt he had a much more vigorous and powerful Shepherd: "the Lord is my shepherd"—everywhere, and going through the valley of the shadow of death.

The second ground of confidence sprung from *his personal experience*. He had had many manifestations of his care; and he often refers to them. He was a man given to much meditation: his memory was stored with instances of the divine interposition in his behalf. "O my God," we hear him say on one occasion, "my soul is cast down"—What then? "Therefore I will remember thee *from the land of Jordan*." Why was "the land of Jordan" mentioned? What happened there? I don't know; the Bible does not inform us; but there was something which happened at the land of Jordan that was impressed on his mind. Perhaps the arm of Saul was lifted against him there; but the King



of kings, the Lord God, interposed: and now that he is in trouble, and in a great strait in after life, he says, "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, *and the Hermonites.*" Why, what happened there? I don't know, the Bible does not tell us: it gives us no *history* of any body but Jesus Christ; it only furnishes us with brief notices of the history of others: but something happened at that place which filled David with confidence, and he says, "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, *and the hill Mizar.*" What happened on that hill we do not know; the Bible does not tell us; but David had chronicled it all in his grateful, affectionate recollection. "Deep," says he, "called unto deep; all thy waves and the billows have gone over me: yet"—says he, feeling confidence from past interposition in his affairs—"yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." But then he says, "He that hath led me beside the still waters, He that hath fed me with the green pastures, He that hath restored my soul, He that leadeth me in the paths of righteousness—will he leave me in the valley of the shadow of death? Will he lead me all my life long, and then when I descend into the valley, forsake me there? It is not likely. Why should he? Why should he lead me all this way in the path of righteousness, if he means to desert me in the valley of the shadow of death? It is inconceivable that God should have loved you all your life, wrought so many deliverances for you, rescuing you from the teeth of the lion, and from the paw of the bear—that he should have snapt asunder a thousand snares that seemed to encircle you—that he should have supported you in your Christian life, and yet leave you when you come to death."

"Yea," said the Psalmist, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear *no evil.*" What! no evil at all? No. What kind of evil is there to be feared? There is *physical* evil—the evil that befalls the body in the valley: *mental* evil—the evil that may be supposed to happen to the soul, and that shall not be left in the valley, but go through it: and thirdly, a sort of evil that often oppresses a dying man very much—the *evil that may befall his family when he is gone from it.* But the Psalmist and the Christian can say, "I will fear *no evil.*"

He will fear *no physical evil.* Certainly it is a very humbling thing to the body to be dragged through the valley of the shadow of death; certainly it is a very humbling thing for the body to become a heap of corruption: but it is no evil, because the Shepherd's care is still watching over all the process, and that very body, reduced to dust, shall be continually watched over by the Shepherd; and the Shepherd shall bring it forth from the grave at the morning of the resurrection, an immortal body. "The upright shall have the dominion;" and I will not fear the evil that will happen to my body; I will fear no evil of that sort. Certainly the mortal struggle is often great; though many feel (and most deeply, too,) more pain in anticipating death than the pains of

death itself. But let the pains of death be what they may—let the rending of the frame-work be however violent—let the taking down of the tabernacle be attended with whatever mortification—the pain will be taken away, the sting will be removed: every thing will be regulated by the Chief Shepherd; therefore “I will fear no evil.”

I will fear *no mental evil*. The mind is often terrified at the thought of the last struggle; we are afraid that the great enemy will come on us in our weakness, and that he will make dark suggestions to our minds. But what says the Psalmist? “I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod shall be with me to support me; thy staff shall be with me to comfort me.” And what shall the rod be there for? Why, to beat off the enemy. And what shall the staff be there for? Why, that, amid the sinking of the flesh and the sinking of the spirit, we may have something to lean on: “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

There is another evil that sometimes lies with great weight on the mind of a person in prospect of death; and that is, *the effect of his death on his family*, on his relatives. He sees a thousand interesting situations in which his children will need his instructions, his counsels, his prayers, his authority, his interposition; and for a moment a gloom may shoot across his spirit. But the gloom is broken, and the light of heaven irradiates the spirit; a more than mortal voice cries in his ear, “Leave thy fatherless children, and let thy widows trust in me.” For remember, the Chief Shepherd does not die; and he is not merely the Shepherd of individuals, but of the whole world; and many strange conjunctions of events can he bring about to promote the welfare of your orphan children—strange conjunctions of events by which he can do more for your bereaved relatives and friends than you could do while you were with them. Your care for your family is only a subordinate thing; it is only one link in the great chain of providential arrangements; if you are removed, the chain is not broken. You may, at death, safely transfer them to His care who never dies, and whose providence never ceases—to Him who is the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless.

There are several lessons which we may learn from the prospect of death, and from the confidence which the Christian expresses at such a time.

First, we learn that *religion is the highest prudence*. Prudence is one of those qualities of the mind that makes one man differ from another. You say one man is prudent, another is not. You honour the man that is prudent; you say, “The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself.” Religion is the greatest prudence. Prudence is a forecasting; it is a reckoning for the future; it is a meeting futurity; it is a preparing for contingent events—making such arrangements that no event can surprise us. Religion is prudence, wisdom. It is preparing for events beyond the grave, for eternity itself. A man may be thoughtful and careful about his future success in life; but what is that, compared with the thought, and the care, and the scriptural, providential preparation for death, and all that lies beyond. Religion is the highest wisdom, the truest philosophy, the soundest sagacity: it is seeking the greatest and best of ends, and securing it by the worthiest and most effectual means.

Secondly, *the man who is prepared for this trial of passing through the valley*

*of the shadow of death, is prepared for every other trial.* If a man does not fear death, he need not fear anything: if a man can look the last enemy in the face without dismay, he may look anything in the face without dismay: if death itself cannot frighten him, what is there that can? The man who is prepared to die, is the man who is fit to encounter all the ills of human life, all the vicissitudes of this mortal pilgrimage—the beating of the winds, and the rolling of the waves. We sing sometimes—and truer lines never were composed in the shape of a verse—

“ ’Tis religion that must give  
Solid pleasure while we live:  
’Tis religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die.”

What must I say to those who have made no preparation, who feel no confidence in the prospect of death, who banish the thought as much as they can, who are endeavouring to stifle every reflection of the sort that may haunt them. Perhaps you think preparation for death may be made just at the moment of death. Some flatter themselves that a short prayer, a simple confession, a turning at last to Jesus Christ will be sufficient. But you are not sure you will be able to do this. Disease may come, and with disease delirium may come, a delirium unfitting you for even one short prayer, or one sound reflection. Why should a man defer that which ought to be the occupation of a life, which ought to command all his powers in all their vigour—why should a man defer that to the last few abrupt moments, to his departure from time to eternity? When a man is going to any distant part of the globe—say to America—what preparation there is! How much it is talked about! How many people come together! What conversation goes on about it! What arrangements for the journey! It is a long journey, a distant journey, an eventful journey. The man talks about it; his family talks about it; his friends prepare in every conceivable way. Oh what infatuation, what stupidity, what folly it is for a man to make no preparation for this distant voyage, the voyage to eternity! Let us endeavour to live as, like David, to fear the grave as little as our bed.

And I will tell you why it is the Christian need not fear. It is *because Christ is there*. The reason why the children of Israel went over Jordan in safety was, because the ark of the covenant made a way for them, and opened the passage into the goodly land. You are about, to-night, to commemorate the event of Jesus entering the valley of the shadow of death. He has perfumed it for his people; he has taken out the sting of it; he has broken an opening at the upper end of it, and he has let in a flood of light that is spreading itself all over the valley. You are meeting together to-night at the sacramental table to commemorate, not your own death—that has not taken place—but the death of Jesus Christ. Your death would have been a gloomy affair—a passage to hell, had he not trod the valley: but because the Shepherd hath died, laid down his life for the sheep, the sheep have the prospect of going through the valley and getting out on the other side into the land of spices.

There is no language like the Bible, no thoughts like Scripture thoughts, no sentiments like those engendered by the faith of the Gospel. “Though I walk”—it is an individual affair—“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Almighty Jesus, grant that every one in this house to-night, may be able to say so, and may make their passage through the valley of the shadow of death, in the faith and the hope of the Gospel: and to his name shall be the glory. Amen.



## THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

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TAVISTOCK CHAPEL, BROAD COURT, DRURY LANE, SEPTEMBER 21, 1834.

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“ And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.”—MATTHEW, xv. 22.

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THE reality and the excellence of grace are only discovered by the strength of the tests to which they are subjected; as silver or gold is tried and purified by the fire. Hereby the sufficiency of God to support his people displays itself incontrovertibly; and the operations of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying and preparing the elect for the kingdom of heaven, are clearly seen.

This chapter, which has been read to you for the second lesson, is replete with the most important instruction. The power of Deity shines forth in a variety of instances; while the benevolence of Jesus extorts the reader's gratitude in the strongest manner. Who can peruse the detail of the interview here recorded, without, at least in a degree, entering into the circumstances of the individual, and ascribing the glory to God?

The boldness of the Saviour in reproving the spiritual pride and ignorance of the scribes and pharisees, stands conspicuous in the foreground: then follows a conspicuous statement of truth: next comes the history involved in my text: and the whole closes with an account of the miracles performed by Christ, in healing all manner of diseases that were brought unto him, and feeding an immense multitude of men, women, and children, with that which, apart from his divine character, would have been insufficient for the wants of even a very few.

Let me, however, confine your attention, on the present occasion, to the interesting female, more especially introduced in the words before us. “A woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.”

Now, the first thing that presents itself here for our meditation, is, the cause of wretchedness that is developed; secondly, the application that is made; thirdly, the discouragement she has to encounter; fourthly, her perseverance; and lastly, her success. And oh that the Spirit of our God may enable me to open this subject to you, and set it before you; that through the guidance and application of the same blessed Spirit, the word may find its way into your heart, enlist your affections in the cause of God, and stir you and me up to

increased diligence, in the service of Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand.

In the first place, consider **THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THE CASE NOW UNDER OUR REVIEW.** No one that was capable of natural feeling, would for one moment doubt the poignancy of her sufferings. A mother; yea, and a *widowed mother* too: and, in addition to all her other sufferings, a mother compelled to witness the hopeless condition of her child—a daughter vexed, grievously vexed, with a devil. Physicians were in vain. She dwelt in a heathen country, where no neighbour, no priest of God, could comfort or direct her. The bitterness of her lamentation we may almost hear in her cry; “Have mercy.” Poor woman; hopeless creature, as far as outward circumstances go. Oh, it is the wailing of a helpless being; of a heart racked by suffering, which she had no means to alleviate. What could she do? Far away from Jerusalem, the fame of the compassionate Jesus reached her ears, and, like Queen Esther, she resolved, come what may, to go and see the King. Yes, she probably reasoned in some such a manner as this: “If I fail, I can be no more wretched than I am; and it may be that he will take pity on me; he will relieve my heavy-laden spirit, and have compassion on my child—my daughter, my vexed, tormented daughter.”

Half hoping, and, perhaps, half fearing, therefore, she goes to Jesus. She quits her home, leaves her neighbours and her kindred. But here, perhaps, it may be asked, “How came she to think of going to Christ?” Ah, brethren, have not you an answer to this question? Just as you and I thought of going to him: it was because she *felt* her misery; and there is no going to Christ unless we are sensible of our misery as sinners; unless we feel the extent of our iniquities, under the condemnation of God’s righteous law: until we feel that there is no soundness in us; until we possess a broken heart and contrite spirit, we never shall be Christians. Mark my words; they are not hastily uttered; they are not the expressions of a moment. Long, long, have I considered, and re-considered, and more and more deeply am I convinced, that there never was a real Christian, and never will be a real Christian, unless he is brought by grace to feel his misery: then he will go like this poor wretched woman, and look for Christ. And then, when he feels his disease, he will look for a physician; and being broken-hearted, he will inquire for the Redeemer; for the Holy Spirit to enlighten and to console him. This poor woman (poor heretofore, but soon to be enriched for ever) felt her wretchedness: a stranger in a strange land, forlorn and destitute; no husband, as far as we read, to comfort her, and sympathize with her, and cheer her sorrows. No; “What can I do?” was probably the language of her mind, venting itself in such expressions as this, again and again.

But mark; a power, invisible—but the more efficacious—which on Scripture authority we call the Spirit of God, bade her go to Jesus Christ, and there we see her presenting her suit in the language of my text: “Have mercy on me Jesus, thou Son of David.” This is the second point to which I would direct your attention—**HER APPLICATION.** Now what a marvel is here; what a wonder do we see? Nature impelled her to seek relief for her tormented child;

but nature alone would not have brought her to Christ. Oh no; you know how often you and I all have, under affliction, under trials, under distresses, under sicknesses, gone to Egypt for help; but never naturally have resorted to Jesus. No; it was the Holy Spirit that led her to come; and it is the Holy Spirit that leads you and me, and all the elect people of God, to Christ. It is not training, it is not education, it is not rank, it is not wealth, it is not outward distinction: it is the invisible power and operation of the Holy Spirit, convincing of sin, and then pointing to Calvary.

And mark her recognition of Christ. It is amazing to see how God has ordained, that even devils—not only this poor heathen woman, but devils themselves—should bear witness to the Deity of Christ. You know that on a certain occasion they cried out, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the Most High God?” But here is a heathen woman, heretofore unenlightened in the truth as it is in Jesus, addresses him as “*Lord*.” “*Lord*,” said she, “thou son of David;” “Oh, Lord, thou Son of David.” Here she acknowledges him to be the Omnipotent Disposer of all events—the Moral Governor of the world; and as having all diseases and inferior agencies subordinate to him. Next she confesses him to be the Christ; the Messiah: “*Thou Son of David*.” This was his designation in the Old Testament; and this was the character in which he was expected to be revealed to the saints in her day:—“*Thou Son of David*.” In the absence of all written information, whether she had ever conversed with the Jews on this point or not, I will unhesitatingly avow my belief, that it was a direct revelation to her by the Holy Spirit. And, my dear brethren, you and I never came to a real knowledge of Jesus, as promised to proceed from David according to the flesh, but by the direction of the Holy Spirit. We may read his lineage in the first chapter of Matthew; and because we cannot disprove the accuracy of it, we may assent: but we shall never assent unto the Scripture in the exact fulfilment of its every import, that he should be of the seed of David according to the flesh; we shall never derive any spiritual advantage, any real, cordial good from it, unless the Holy Spirit opens up to us Christ, the promised Messiah, as the son of David.

And why should we doubt that the Holy Ghost will thus teach us? Christ himself hath declared in John, xv. 26, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” Now one of the first things that the Spirit does in the heart of a believer is to testify of Jesus Christ. And doth not our adorable Redeemer, in the very next chapter, at the fourteenth verse, say, “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” It is the office of the Holy Spirit, not only to convince of sin, but to take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto the heart of the sinner. By virtue of this we come to know our salvation; in virtue of this we discover our interest in that blood that cleanseth from all sin; and it is only by virtue of this that we can obtain pardon, and peace, and joy, through the Holy Ghost. Oh, remember the important office which the Holy Spirit sustains in the Church of Christ; to reveal Christ as well as to convince of sin; and comfort the sinner after he is brought to a saving sense of his iniquities.

You remember the vision of the Babylonish monarch, in the third chapter of the prophet Daniel, and the twenty-fifth verse: he threw the three Jews into

the furnace, because they could not renounce their allegiance unto the true God: but Nebuchadnezzar, terrified and astonished, exclaimed, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Now, my brethren, who told Nebuchadnezzar that the fourth was the Son of God? Who revealed the image of the Son of God to his mind? You understand that not a word had passed; no interpreter stood by; in fact no one saw this fourth person but himself. This is the way that the Lord Jesus is revealed unto the people of God. The by-standers see him not; they know nothing of what is passing between God and the soul of their friend; they know nothing of the secret vision that is vouchsafed unto the lowly follower of the lowly Jesus: no; it is all a private communication between the Spirit and the heart.

Again we may instance, in confirmation of this doctrine, St. Paul, who when he was going up from Damascus, on the bloody errand of putting to death those whom he might find worshipping Jesus Christ, *he* saw a vision, and he heard a voice; but *none other* saw it, or heard it. None others saw it. There was a great *light*; but there was more than that; there was a *voice* came out of the light: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" How came he to know it was the Lord? The Holy Spirit must have revealed him. My dear fellow sinners, thus it is with you and me. When the time of life is come that we are permitted to realize our interest in the salvation of God, then we hear the voice of Jesus; then he clears away the film from our eyes, and the veil from our eye-lids, and we get a glimpse of His face who is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely: then we say, "What can compare with the object of our affections; more lovely than all the creation, more to be desired than gold and silver?" Nay, if we could walk the celestial course, and tread the mansions of everlasting glory at this moment, by far the most beauteous object that would meet our eye, would be Him who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; who, when in the flesh, exhibited no form nor comeliness to be admired, but is now the object of adoring gratitude to the millions, and thousands of millions who have washed their robes in his shed blood.

But there are who deny the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; there are who would tear the diadem of deity from the head of our once crucified, but now exalted, Jesus. With regard to his own divinity, I can but observe how forcibly he argues with the infidel Jews. In John, x. 36, we find him thus disputing: "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." Again, in John, xv. 24; "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

Here, in the chapter before us, which as I have already remarked has been read to you, we have three notable miracles performed within a few verses of each other. The first is in the twenty-eighth verse, the circumstance that closed the passage of which my text is a part: "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter



was made whole from that very hour." The second is in the thirtieth verse, where great multitudes came unto him, "having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus feet; and he healed them." And the last is that which is recorded in the close of the chapter, "And they did all eat;"—the miraculous feeding of thousands of men, and women, and children—"they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat seven baskets full." Now these miracles prove the reality of his divinity, for as he himself told us, in the quotation just now read to you, "If he did not do works that no other man did, then believe him not." But if the works which he did were works which Deity only could perform, then, by a necessary inference, he is divine.

But in addition to this testimonial of his being very God, as well as very man, we find him recognizing appellations, and receiving the worship, due only to God. In the twenty-second verse, this woman, this poor comfortless woman, comes to *worship* him; does he reprove her? Does he tell her that she is mistaken with regard to his divine character, and therefore she ought not to worship him? No; he admits, he suffers it. So that they who allow Christ to be a good man, though they do not allow his divinity, concede too much. I say, if he was not God, he was not a good man; for a human being can never be good, who tolerates what is expressly forbidden in the second commandment, as the worshipping any other but God. When Paul and Barnabas performed a miracle at Lystra, we read in Acts, xiv. 11, the people were so astonished, that they would have done them divine honours: "They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker." Does Barnabas, or does Paul, allow of this divine homage? "When the Apostles heard of it, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.

But there is yet one more illustrious instance of this, occurring in the Revelation of St. John, xix. 10. John tells us, "I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me," (this was an angel,) "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." So that you see that all the inspired men that are recorded as having divine homage offered unto them in the sacred Scriptures—worship attempted to be given to them—reject it, renounce it, caution the blind and misguided idolaters against offending God by such an act of blasphemy, and declare, that they are to turn from the worship of idols—or the creature—to serve the living and the true God. But when Jesus demanded of his disciples, in Matthew, xvi. 13, what they knew of him—"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? They said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am." Our Saviour was bringing the matter home; he introduced the matter to them in a masterly way; before they were aware of his purpose or his intention, he alters the question from the public to themselves, believers: and for this great reason; it was of no importance to their salvation what men in general said of him, and who he was, or what he was; but their own eternal salvation was involved in the right understanding and recognition of his divine

character: "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Now does our Saviour reprehend Peter? Does he say, as the angel did to John in the Revelations, "See that thou do it not; see that thou recognize not me as the Son of God?" Quite otherwise; for he answered and said unto him "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." There is another passage confirmatory of what I just now said—that we never can know Christ but by the testimony of the Holy Spirit: we never can know Jesus as "God over all, blessed for evermore," neither can we know our interest in him as being bound up with him in the bundle of life, but by the operation and influence of the Holy Ghost. Remember that, my dear friends;—let every person in the blessed Trinity have the honour and glory that belongs to his peculiar office. It is the office of the Spirit "to take of the things of Jesus, and shew them to our hearts." Follow the Saviour up to the very day of his death, and we shall perceive, that as his last moment drew nigh, when he was placed at the bar of Pontius Pilate, he himself confessed that he was the Son of God. In Matthew, xxvii. 11, it is stated, "Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest:"—that is "Even so." "I am the king of the Jews; the Son of the living God:" for the Jews themselves admit that their Messiah is to be of divine origin. The objections of Unitarians, or properly speaking, Socinians, appear to me to originate in the *reasoning pride* of man. Man refuses to believe the things of God further than his finite capacity can comprehend. By parallel reasoning he ought to doubt, nay to deny, his own existence: for there is nothing more mysterious in the Divinity and the Trinity of three persons in one God, than is involved in our own existence. We know that we are composed of different parts—soul and body; we assent to the truth; but it has never yet been within the compass of the human capacity to understand this wonderful mystical union subsisting between the two.

I now hasten to consider, THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF THIS POOR WOMAN. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." The first discouragement is, *the silence of Christ*. "But he answered her not a word. "What," she might have said, "is this the character of David's Son and David's Lord? Can a poor agonized widow apply before him in vain, and not so much as the smallest notice be taken of her?" And even when *the disciples joined in the request*, "Send her away, for she crieth after us;" there is nothing to induce her hope. Notwithstanding this she would not cease. She came and worshipped him, notwithstanding the apparent indifference he manifested towards her. Now this draws forth a *reply, which would seem to cut off every hope*: "He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." Even this does not dishearten her: she was conversant with this saying; she had often heard it; for it was in common usage among the Jews towards the whole Gentile world. She is not discouraged; she is not turned back: but hark to what she rejoins in the next verse: "Truth, Lord;"—it is very true—"yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." And here we see her humility: she considers

herself no better than a dog; she acknowledges there is nothing deserving in her for the boon she is asking. Here is also submission of mind to the will and the sovereignty of God, who first chose the Jews to be his peculiar people. And here is a conviction of the all-sufficiency of his love: she pleads only for crumbs; one crumb which falls from the abundant provision which is made for others, one crumb will satisfy me. Like the poor widow—"If I may but touch"—one touch—"the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole."

Here, then, in the next place, we see **HER PERSEVERANCE**. How wonderful is this! Are you not surprised, my brethren? Oh, I have been astonished, again and again, in reading the history of this heretofore heathen woman. How justly might she put Christians to the blush? How easily do they turn away from pursuing the salvation of their souls; the great things which belong to their peace. Through various difficulties, oppressed with anxieties for her child; her suit treated with silence, then language amounting almost to a prohibition; and next with words somewhat like scornful derision: yet nothing could damp her, or keep her back. None, or all of these combined, could deter her from pressing her suit—why? Because she believed in Jesus.

Ah, my brethren, here is the secret of her hope under such circumstances, **HER REWARD**: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." She came from afar; she spared no pains; she accounted her toil, her lengthened walk, no inconvenience: she regards not the fatigue she underwent; she got the blessing she wanted; she returned joyful to her home: "Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Here we see that faith is not without its reward; here we see that she was not an enthusiast; here we see the happy and blessed effects of persevering faith. Oh, my friends, does not this hold out to us a lesson of most important instruction? Ought it not to make us hide our heads in shame, for the weakness of our faith, and the greatness of our unbelief; for the prevalence of our doubts, which have often paralyzed our energies when seeking the Lord Jesus?

We may use this subject, I think—and if I mistake not, it is agreeable to the mind of God that we should so use it—in the first place for *direction where to apply in all our distresses*—Jesus, as the object of our faith. There is likewise an especial object pointed out to us in this history—we see a *direction for parental love*. Where should parents go for their children, grievously tormented by Satan; grievously vexed by evil tempers; children who yield to evil propensities; children who distress their parents, who are running after the follies, and vanities, and vices of the world; who throw off their parents' authority; and will have none of their parents' advice;—what can parents do in such a situation? Go to Jesus; he has encouraged you. This poor widow travelled from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, until she had found Christ; and when she had found him she would not go without the blessing. She was a Jacob; she was a wrestler. Perhaps I am speaking to some persons who have undutiful children. Oh you that are parents like these; you that have children like these; you that, perhaps, have an undutiful ingrate boy; one perhaps amongst a number that reject and spurn the advice which you have given.

have you ever thought of carrying that boy to Christ? Have you ever thought of going to Jesus and wrestling with him in prayer? Have you ever interceded with him in the closet? Oh, try; there will you find comfort under such trials as these; there, and there alone, have you a right to expect the blessing which would gladden your hearts, and save the soul of your child alive. I do believe we are all guilty in this matter; that we have not so prayed for our children as we ought, especially where hardness of heart, and blindness of spiritual things overshadow their minds. Then you should go to Jesus, and plead as for yourselves (we do not say plead as for the happiness of your children)—“Have mercy on me, my son, my daughter, is grievously vexed with a devil.” My dear friends; prayer is the only thing, in the exercise of which I can recommend you with a good scriptural hope of success. Whatever your family trials may be; whatever the irreligion of the husband, or the wife, the father, or the mother, the brother, or the sister, may be, cry unto Jesus; spread the case before him. Plead his all-sufficiency; acknowledge your unworthiness:—“Yet, Lord, the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

And oh, my dear friends, let us learn finally this example, and copy this example, *of faith and perseverance*. What if the answer do not come to-day; if it be postponed for a week, a year, yea, or years—what if we only hear the voice of God, announcing the blessing as we are departing out of life; will it not be an ample recompense to all our diligence in prayer? That as we leave this lower world, we have the evidence of the Spirit of God that our family and friends are brought into a state of covenant salvation; and that before the dinness of death has deprived us of vision, we are privileged to see those so near and dear to us, as members of our own domestic circle, turning unto God—giving themselves up to the Lord to supply our places when we are removed to the house appointed for all living, a seed to serve God in their day and generation.

Let us, therefore, take encouragement; let us be strong in the Lord. Let us be prayerful, and we shall be successful: let us believe, and it shall be according to God’s word, and our abounding necessities.



## THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

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REV. J. A. JAMES\*.

TABERNACLE, BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 25, 1834.

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"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee."—PSALM, lxxvii. 1—3.

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THE Psalm from which the text is selected, is one of the most beautiful of those inspired epitomes in which the Church, under the older economy, chanted the praises of her God, confessed her faith in the promises of the Messiah, and uttered her longing desire for their great and glorious consummation. The Psalm refers to the coming of Christ, the promulgation of his Gospel, and the conversion of the Gentiles. There can be no reasonable doubt that his advent was the "mercy" that God was to show to his ancient people: the prospect of the accomplishment of this hope, formed, amidst every season of personal, domestic, and national calamity, the chief source of consolation in the breast of the pious Jew. The scheme of mediation which was accomplished by the sacrificial atonement of the Saviour, was emphatically God's "way." The Hindoos have a tradition that our world was once united to the source of light and love, and was the scene of untainted purity, and undisturbed peace: but by sin it became severed from the fountain of love and light; and has ever since been sinking deeper and deeper, like a smitten and vagrant spirit, into darkness and misery; and that at length literal darkness will cover the whole world; when some benign spirit will raise it up out of its abyss of misery and darkness, and unite it again to the fountain from which it is now separated. My brethren, all this is literally true, taken from its traditional and adventitious circumstances, and connected with the discovery of the Word of God. The benevolent Spirit *has* come, and our world is being lifted up, to be restored again to the fountain of happiness and holiness. And its restoration, through the mediation of Christ, is emphatically God's "way." It is not the invention of an impostor, nor a human device: it is a scheme prompted by the love, devised by the wisdom, accomplished by the power, demanded by the justice, and applied by the grace of God. It is God's "way," and he has made himself answerable for all the results. In resting our hopes of eternal life upon the sacrifice of Christ, we are not at a peradventure; we are not waiting in trembling anxiety for the disclosures of eternity, to ascertain whether we have been resting upon the rock or the sand.

\* Anniversary Sermon for the Bristol Auxiliary Missionary Society.

What is called in one expression, God's "way," is called in the next, God's "saving health." Man, at his creation, was in the highest spiritual condition: there was no moral disease in his soul: his understanding was all consciousness, his heart all love, his life all holiness. But Adam fell; and from that moment was smitten with disease incurable by any except Almighty power. He has communicated the hereditary taint to all his posterity; and of the whole human race it has been said, that they are covered, as respects their minds, with "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores," which have not been healed up, nor mollified with ointment.

But God has devised a method of cure. We have it in the Gospel. My brethren, there are men who talk of the perfectability of human nature upon principles purely scientific: they would restore the heart from the dominion of sin, without the Bible, and govern society without God. Their ignorance is equal to their impiety, and their impudence equal to both. For they have made their assertion in the very face of history, which tells us the experiment has been tried, and tried under every possible advantage, and tried without the smallest success. Education, political economy, systems of jurisprudence, will not meet the case; and nothing but "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God" will restore the man to sanity and moral health: and this will be the case; for it is God's "saving health."

Having thus very briefly explained the two leading expressions of the passage, I go on to consider, under the first head of discourse, the principles which pervade this beautiful prayer; in the second place, the object to which these principles tend, and in which they meet, and lastly, the order of means here established by which this object is to be accomplished. May the Spirit of God assist both the preacher and the hearer, while we meditate on these important subjects.

**In the first place, I am TO ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLES THAT PERVADE THIS BEAUTIFUL PRAYER.**

The first that meets our eye is *humility*. Here is no claim upon justice for any favour; here is no word of merit; here is no appeal to equity: it is the trembling voice of penitence supplicating mercy: "God be merciful to us." Ah! my brethren, we must look to him, for we can look nowhere else. If we look to justice, it writes our sentence of condemnation; if we look to holiness it approves the sentence; if we look to power, it is ready to execute it; if we look to wisdom, it is ready to furnish the power and the means to accomplish this dreadful end. It is mercy—free, rich, sovereign mercy, alone that can be our friend: and it *is* our friend: and having called on wisdom to devise means of salvation, and having devised it through the sacrifice of Christ, all the other attributes of Deity turn round, and smile with mercy upon us, and join in our salvation.

In the second place, look at *the patriotism* that meets us in this prayer: "God be merciful to us"—to us Jews. "Look down," as if the Psalmist had said, "upon Judea, thy chosen, thy favourite land." The national predilections of the Jews were strong even to a proverb; as is exemplified in that exquisitely pathetic song which poets have attempted to imitate, which came from the lips of the exiles of Judea and from their hearts too, as they sat down upon the

banks of Babylon's rivers, and exclaimed, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning: if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And who can wonder at their attachment, or who can blame it? They had no ordinary motives for the love of country: they had something more than the struggles of liberty against oppression, science against barbarism, and literature against ignorance, to cherish their feelings of nationality, and to fan the flame of patriotism. Judea, their country, was the land chosen of God to be the scene of the most wonderful of all his works—works which are to fill immensity with glory, and eternity with praise. And can we be astonished that the Jews should be attached to the soil and the air of such a country as this? Oh no. What feelings of pious exultation might the Jew indulge at that day, when he compared his own country with the state of surrounding nations. While darkness brooded over the sons of superstition, and the pale orbs of science and philosophy shed their pale, disastrous light upon the world, his countrymen possessed, in the knowledge of the true God, a purer system of government than Plato ever imagined, or Cicero ever taught.

But although we have no such reasons as these to boast of the land that gave us birth, yet that man should abjure the name of Englishman who does not love his country, or expatriate himself from the shores which he dishonours by a want of attachment to his native land. Where shall men find reasons for national attachment, if they are not to be found here? I speak of it not as an Englishman merely: *then* I might refer you to your noble institutions, the work of ages, the wonder and the envy of the world: I might refer you to this country, which is the temple of freedom, where civil and religious liberty are enjoyed: I might tell you of our equal laws, and their incorruptible administration; I might talk of the extent of our commerce, the splendour of our science, and the stores of our learning: I might tell you it is the land of your fathers, the land of your cradle, and which will be, in all probability, the land of your sepulchre. But I am addressing you to-night as a *Christian minister*: and, brethren, it is in view of the *spiritual* privileges of my country that I feel my most grateful exultation. Look at your Bible societies: look at your Missionary societies: look at your Tract societies. What object of misery or of guilt has not been contemplated by the inventive mind of English mercy, called forth by the grace which comes from heaven, and the spirit of benevolence? I love thee, my country:

" *I love thee* when I see thee stand  
The hope and joy of every land;  
A sea-mark in the tide of time,  
Rearing to heaven thy brow sublime;  
Whence beams of gospel splendour shed  
A sacred halo round thy head;  
And Gentiles from afar behold—  
Not as on Sinai's rocks of old—  
God, from eternity conceal'd,  
In his own light in thee reveal'd.

" *I love thee* when I hear thy voice  
Bid the despairing world rejoice.

And now from shore to shore proclaim  
 In every tongue Messiah's name—  
 That name at which, from sea to sea,  
 All nations yet shall bow the knee.  
 I love thee next to heaven above ;  
 Land of my fathers ! thee I love :  
 And, rail thy sland'ers as they will,  
 With all thy faults, *I love thee still.*"

Then we have *reasons* for patriotism, brethren : we will say presently how this patriotism should show itself.

The next principle of the prayer that meets us is *mercy* : for it was not a selfish principle in the mind even of a Jew : " God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." Think what the state of the world was when the Psalmist presented this prayer. Upon the mountains of his native land, as far as the eye of imagination could reach, he could see nothing but nations sunk in sin—the abominable idolatries of the Gentiles—the dark places of the earth filled with the habitations of cruelty. If he looked to the vast outspread in the east and north, there was Assyria, then in the zenith of its glory, with ten thousand altars smoking with sacrifices to the false deities they worshipped. If he looked to the south, there was Egypt, the fertile source of every idolatry, its temples crowded with besotted devotees. If he looked nearer home, in the bloody rites of Moloch, he saw fathers leading the most beloved of their sons, and mothers the most beautiful of their daughters, to immolate them at his shrine. If he turned his eyes to the commercial shores of Tyre, he witnessed the groves of Ashtaroth filled with his detestable rites. If his eye went down the Mediterranean, and Europe had been then thought of, he saw the commonwealths of Greece, and the ancient nations of our quarter of the world, cradled in superstition, and wrapt in the swaddling bands of idolatry. Nothing but what was seen on the hallowed soil of Judea—nothing presented itself to his pious and compassionate mind, but nations cursing themselves, as they were insulting God, with the crimes of idolatry. And he must have had a heart of stone, and not a heart of flesh, if, with such a scene around him, he could have said otherwise than from the very bottom of his heart—" Oh God ! be merciful to us ; that thy way may be known *on earth*, thy saving health among *all nations*." And what hearts *you* must have, my hearers, and what hearts must *we ministers* have, if we can do otherwise than look abroad upon the world lying in wickedness, without the tenderest compassion, and without having all the bowels of compassion moving within us !

But, fourthly, we speak of *the piety* that is apparent in this prayer. " Let the people praise thee, O God ; let all the people praise thee." And you will particularly remark that it was not mere compassion for the miserable condition of the heathen that moved in his breast ; but zeal for the glory of God, tender concern for the honour of Jehovah. Let me to-night attempt to elevate your minds. Weep : you ought to weep for the miserable condition of the heathen. Weep again ; and weep other tears, and tears more sorrowful, for the dishonour done to God by idolatry. We must not give up ourselves to religious philanthropy ; there must be *zeal* for the glory of God. Oh, what were the deities that men worshipped ! A great author has said that they were " little else than



the worst vices of the human heart, elevated to the heavens, to be invested with all the charms of Olympus, that they might then come down to make men wicked by their own example." He has correctly called it all "a lie:" they have changed the glory of God—converted it into a lie. If we look at the heathen deities, their multiplicity is a lie against the unity of God; their material representation a lie against his spirituality; their folly and fraud a lie against his wisdom; their impurity a lie against his holiness; their oppression a lie against his justice; their limited and separated mode of action a lie against his universal dominion and omnipresence. My brethren, how could you bear to know that slander was circulated against that image of purity, the mother that bare you. How could you bear to have whispered through society that there was a taint upon her virtue? How could you bear that slander should be circulated against the father you revered and loved, and whom you knew to be the model of all excellence? Could you sit coolly down and be told that this is the case? My Father who art in heaven! shall this heart, which professes to be the heart of a child, then, sit down quiet while thy name is slandered through thy world, and all these objects of human adoration are presented to the world as gods? No: shall it not attempt to rise with higher feelings than mere compassion? Give loose to your compassion; but remember, God is insulted, God is dishonoured by idolatry. We have never felt as we ought in this particular. We must exert ourselves till the earth is not polluted, nor heaven insulted by one single object of adoration that pretends to be a deity.

Now, this is the principle of the text, and it must be the principle of our hearts. Let me tell you, that zeal for the honour of God is rather a sublime ingredient in that compound emotion, which we call missionary feeling and zeal, than mere compassion for the miserable condition of the children of men.

I go on to bring before you **THE OBJECT IN WHICH ALL THESE PRINCIPLES MEET, AND TO WHICH IN THEIR INFLUENCE THEY ALL TEND**—the conversion of the world to God. The field is the world—the seeds, the truths of the Gospel—and our object is to scatter those through the whole length and breadth, that the full harvest may be at last brought to Christ. At any rate, whatever sneers men may throw upon our object, we are exempt from the accusation of seeking what is insignificant: there is a sublimity in our enthusiasm, if it is enthusiasm.

Now, my dear hearers, I want you to catch at one expression—*the conversion of the world* to Christ. That is our object. This is the motto that floats on our banners, the watch-word that is on our lips, the shout that runs along the lines of the host, with which they rush to the enterprise: "The world for Christ—the world for Christ—the world for Christ!" This is what we are seeking, and it is no longer a secret. And if you examine, you will find this the very object of eternal covenant between the Father and the Son in the scheme of redemption, and the object of the commission given by Christ to his apostles. There is room, brethren, for the world in the boundless latitude of the atonement, in the infinite benevolence of God, in the amplitude of the Church, and in the regions of heaven: and there must be room for the world in your hearts, in your prayers, and in your purses. You sink down into a littleness which does not belong to the missionary enterprise, when you think of any thing else

than the conversion of the world. Your prayers, your solicitudes, your efforts, must all be gathered up in the expression, "Let the people praise thee, O God." And nothing must satisfy us but that which satisfies Christ: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." And what, think you, will satisfy the soul of Christ? Oh think what that soul is—its clear perception of moral excellence; its vast capacities; its wonderful faculty of enjoyment—and then say, if the conversion of the Negroes in the West Indies, the conversion of the Hottentots in South Africa, the conversion of the Esquimaux on the coast of Labrador and the Arctic regions—the conversion of the numerous degraded and polluted savages of the South Sea Islands—if these shall suffice? No, no; he must have China with its teeming population; he must have Birmah, and Siam, and Persia, and Tartary, and all the mighty empires of the East, and all the abundance of the Isles: and he will never rest satisfied; and his soul will never know its loudest triumphs, till he looks down from his throne, and sees the world reposing in peace beneath his cross and his sceptre. And you and I must go with him; we must be at one mind with Christ; and we must set our hearts on the world, and be satisfied with nothing less. I do not mean to undervalue what is doing for the Negroes in the West Indies, for the Hottentots, for the Esquimaux, for the South Sea Islanders: I am saying that your zeal and mine, must not be *satisfied* with this. All this would be nothing more than taking the outposts—than a victory accomplished by an invading army in taking one town or city. We have done more than a thousand times enough to refute the charge of having spent our time for nought. In the conversion of a soul, there is the enjoyment of more happiness than this great world of ours (looking at its temporal existence) will ever enjoy from the morning of creation till the day of conflagration.

This, then, is our object. And here let me pause to ask what some will think a very strange question—a question we ought to ask every man, woman, and child in this assembly—*Why is not the world converted to God?* That it is not, there is abundant proof; that it is to be, there is testimony no less conclusive—the testimony of God. The order for its conversion was issued eighteen centuries ago: means for its conversion were provided at the same time; the promise of the power that was to effect it, was made at the same moment. And why is not the world converted? To answer that question we are not to search into the treasures of the Eternal mind; we are not to resolve it into mere sovereignty: I am not speaking of the secret purposes of God, but of human instrumentality: and I say again, for the answer of the question we must look around us and within us. I know that Satan does not want the soul to be converted: I know the world does not want itself to be converted; I know the unconverted sinner does not. But where are we to find the reason? Is not God infinitely benevolent? Has not God the Son died for the world? Is not the Spirit willing to illuminate all in this world that look up to him for illumination? And yet the world is not converted. (I am speaking, I remind you, of human instrumentality.) You and I, brethren—those who profess Christ—are to blame in this matter. Jesus Christ spoke and reasoned on this subject: he said, that if the works which had been done in the cities which were the chief scenes of his benevolence, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. I argue the same, and say, that if the

Christian world had done its duty from the time when Christ gave the commission, "Go into all nations; and preach the Gospel to every creature," it would have been converted before now.

The Christian world has not entered into the matter as it ought to; we are not hearty in the work. That is strange, you say. Is it? Consult your own experience. Do you seek the conversion of the world, as Satan seeks its destruction? Do you seek the conversion of the world as you seek your own interest in the world? Do you seek the conversion of the world by prayer, by property, by influence, by efforts, in any thing like a degree proportionate to the object? You hold missionary meetings, and are regaled with missionary speeches and anecdotes; but where is the whole heart identified with the cause? Where is the missionary spirit cultivated in the closet, taken up in the business, interwoven with all your habits, and calculations, and purposes? Oh, tell me if the Christian world has yet been hearty in seeking the conversion of the pagan world? Before the millenium come, there must be other efforts than any we have yet witnessed.

I go on under the third head of discourse, to consider **THE ORDER OF MEANS BY WHICH THIS OBJECT IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED AS THAT ORDER IS ESTABLISHED AND SET BEFORE US IN THE TEXT.**

Religion, like charity, begins at home: it does not begin at all if it does not begin there: it can begin nowhere but there. You will observe this is the established order: "God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us." Let us have these blessings that we may be blessings to others—"That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee."

Under this head of discourse I shall arrange my thoughts, and direct yours, in the following order. This country must be blessed in order that it may bless the world: our churches must be blessed, in order that they may bless the country: we ministers must be blessed, in order that we may be a blessing to the churches.

In the first place, *In order that this country may be a blessing to the world, it must be a blessing itself.* "God be merciful to us"—to Britain—"and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy ways may be known on earth; thy saving health among nations." I am quite aware that this country cannot stand in the same kind of relation to the world as Jerusalem did. In Jerusalem the great atonement was offered. From Jerusalem the Apostles went out. In Jerusalem the foundations of the Christian Church were laid. But this country bears an intimate connexion with the evangelization of the world. Where is the world to look to but to England and to America? We two are put in trust with the Gospel for all nations. All other nations are Pagan, or Mahometan, or Popish, or Infidel, or Heretical, or asleep: where, then, is the world to look to, brethren, but to England and to America, as the chief instruments of blessing? Oh my country! mayest thou understand; and understanding, mayest thou recollect; and recollecting, mayest thou accomplish the designs of God in all this dispensation! When he raised thee up to thy rocky seat in the midst of Europe—when he "lengthened thy cords" to touch the extreme east and west; when he gave intelligence to thy mind, and power to



thine arm; when he poured commerce and riches into thy lap, and embellished thee with the arts—then he said to thee, “For this purpose have I raised thee up, to be my salvation to the ends of the world.” Oh Britain, forget this, and the time is at hand, when thy ships shall drop their freight on other shores, and their commerce shall flow through other channels; and thou thyself shall be like ancient Tyre—a barren rock for fishermen to dry their nets; and the ship-masters and the sailors that pass by shall say, “Alas! for that great city; for she knew not the day of her visitation: but now it is hid from her eyes!” But on the other hand, be faithful (as it is my prayer and my hope that thou wilt), and then, when thou hast fulfilled thy high commission, and evangelized the nations, thou shalt dwell in honour and repose, till, with the rest of the kingdoms, thou sinkest into the conflagration of the world. Oh, my brethren, I want you to catch up this idea, that this is the way to shew your patriotism—to spread religion through the land, and to seek that the land might spread it through all other lands.

I confess there are many things that please me in the signs of the times. There was never so many godly ministers of all denominations, preaching the truth as it is in Jesus: I am a little inclined to hope that, upon the whole, there never was so much real religion in the country. There never were so many institutions for promoting the spread of religious knowledge. But these things fan the spark of pride: there are other and doleful sights; there are portentous as well as favourable symptoms. Look at the vast mass of unsanctified talent, wealth, and influence, which we have in the midst of us. Look at the mass of practical atheism, which is to be found in both extremes of society. Look at the dearth of religion in our senate houses; and mark how religion is sometimes scoffed at, on some of its appearances, even there. Look at the tone of our periodical literature, the scepticism of our philosophy, the pollution of our fashionable poetry, and the irreligion of our no less fashionable novels. Look at the multitudes who attend no place of worship; neglecting the Gospel, and the salvation that is in the Gospel. Look at the prevalence of religion and impiety. Look at the low state of religious feeling among many that call themselves the people of God. Look at the irritating and increasingly irritable feelings of the two great bodies of evangelical professors, which cannot be altogether pleasing in the eyes of their common Father and their common Saviour. Look at all these things, and many more that might be mentioned, and ask if you and I have not something to do in seeking to bless Britain, or that she might be blessed before she can become a blessing to the world.

Let me plead with you on behalf of your country, and entreat you to plead with God on her behalf. Let me call on you to take a deep interest in the moral welfare of the land which gave you birth. Give your property, give your prayers, give your influence to the various institutions that are raised up for the spread of divine truth; to our Bible and Tract societies, to our city and town missions, to our colleges and our schools of learning. These stand high, and have a place in your esteem, and no small share of your property. Go on to accumulate piety in Britain, so far as you can do it instrumentally; just as Joseph accumulated corn in the granaries of Egypt, not for Egypt alone, but to keep alive the starving nations. Go on to accumulate piety in Britain, as men accumulate water in the reservoirs to supply canals and cities, and those that



would otherwise perish, or feel the lack of it. Go on to accumulate piety, not merely for this country's sake, but that this country may rise to the station in which it seems to be designed to be a blessing to the world. Remember that every minister who is raised up to preach the Gospel at home, is another advocate for missions abroad: every new place of worship erected, is another place where the world's interests are cared for: every new congregation that is formed is a new home and foreign mission at the same time: every Sabbath-school in which are taught the principles of the Christian religion, is a little rivulet which sends its quota into the river of life, which is to run through all nations. Every tear of penitence that drops on earth, though on earth unseen, is an event that is felt on the other side of the globe: every sinner that stoops at the footstool of heaven, and asks for mercy, is another friend and auxiliary to the various institutions that are formed to bless the nations with the light of divine truth. Think what was done for the world when Whitfield and Wesley were converted. Think what was done for the world when Bogue, and Waugh, and Wilks, and Burder, and Hill, were converted. Think what was done for the world when Morrison, and Carey, and Vanderkemp, and Coke, were converted. See what a connexion between home operations, and the spread of the Gospel abroad. Therefore let us be up and doing: let us pray with respect to our country, "God be merciful to *us* ; that thy way may be known *on earth*, thy saving health among *all nations*."

Secondly, I am to show, *that, in order that our country may be blessed, our churches must be blessed—in order that they may be instrumentally a blessing to the land.* For what is to diffuse these spiritual blessings? Not evangelical creeds, articles, and formularies; nor merely dignitaries of the Church, nor humbler officers among our own body, unless they have the spirit of piety in them. Mere external circumstances will never convert the unconverted. It is the piety—the vital, fervent, evangelical piety of the churches of Christ—whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent—whether of the Baptist or the Methodist connexion. Lukewarm, corrupt professors of religion, are the practical heretics, who, instead of blessing, curse the land: while, on the other hand, lively, spiritual, sincere Christians, are the men who are the blessing of their country, whether they worship God in a barn or in a cathedral.

Now, suffer for a few moments, my brethren, the word of exhortation on this subject. We have now been, I believe, forty years or upwards, at work upon the great business of converting the world to Christ. That is a term commensurate with the account given in the Acts of the Apostles—(I am not speaking in a discouraging manner, but with a view to show, that the world must be converted to Christ; and I am anxious that the Church should not sit down with complacency, and, looking round on their societies, say, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" I want to take from you all pretensions to self-complacency at what has been done.) I say, that forty years is the term that measures the efforts of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles: and do think how much more rapid the spread of the Gospel was *then* than it is *now*. How comes this? Was the world more favourable then in its political constitution and habits, and conceptions of Christianity, than it is now? As for *Judaism*, we may judge from the reception which Christ and his Apostles met with from the Jews, they had a more deadly malignity against Christianity then, than they

have even now. And as to *Paganism*, it is, and ever has been the same in all ages and in all countries. In Greece and Rome it was incorporated with the state; the magistrate was the priest, and the civil officers of the government bore a very distinguished place in the rites of religion. At the time Christianity was first propagated, Rome was the mistress of the world: she had at her disposal, and under her control, literature, eloquence, and refinement. In the enlightened age of Augustus, the empire was filled with historians, poets, philosophers: and, perhaps, there never was a period of Christianity, in which Paganism was more hostile than this. But perhaps you say it was *miracles* did it. Why, miracles have no inherent power to convert a soul. Our Lord performed a series of stupendous miracles; John the Baptist does not appear to have wrought a single miracle: yet how much more successful was the ministry of John than that of Christ! On the day of Pentecost, it was not the gift of tongues that converted the three thousand; it was the blessing of the Spirit poured on the sermon of Peter. So that we are not to resolve all into the miraculous agency which accompanied the preaching.

There are four causes which have been assigned, to which the rapid success of the Gospel in the first ages may be attributed.

In the *first* place, the Christians of the primitive times, were eminently detached in their affections from this world. There was harmony between their profession and their practice. The great things of eternity were clothed with a peculiar solemnity: the world to them was a dream; the kingdom of Christ was the great reality. There was not the money-getting worldly-mindedness in the Christians of those days, that we too often see exhibited in the Christians of our own.

Then, *secondly*, the Christians of those days were eminently distinguished by a spirit of prayer. So entirely did they feel their dependence on prayer, and so abundant were they in the use of means, that to "call on the name of the Lord" and to be "disciples of the Lord," were synonymous terms. They did not meet at public meetings, and pass resolutions that prayer was necessary, and then go away and not pray at all, or very little: "they *gave* themselves to prayer." Nor did their prayers render them indolent: their prayers did more to raise their zeal than the sermons of their ministers. They sunk down in their labours for Christ in all the nothingness of the creature; they rose from their knees in a kind of consciousness of omnipotence. They stripped off, as they went to prayer, all human dependence; and they invested themselves with the power of the Almighty. They did not depend upon eloquence and anecdote; they spoke immediately to God, and not merely to one another: they were *mighty* in prayer.

Then, *thirdly*, the conversion of the world was a matter of common concern, and paramount interest, to clergy and laity, to rich and poor, young and old, learned and unlearned. There was a kind of missionary fellowship, which went through the whole length and breadth of the Christian Church: they considered proselytism their very calling. The Apostles in those days had no need to spend one half their time in admonishing and rousing the brethren, and directing them as to the right proportion of money, and time, and influence, which they should devote to the Christian cause. The platform was not then erected in aid of the pulpit; the speech was not then a necessary auxiliary to the sermon;

strangers were not to be sent for to aid the stated pastor. All these things were unnecessary: and God bring on the day when they shall be no longer necessary for us; when Christian principle shall be so alive and vigorous, that it shall only be necessary to lay before Christians what is their duty to see them up and doing. We are but in the infancy of the missionary age: we are only doing that which God permits in kind accommodation to our weakness. Those who come after us, will smile at what we think necessary to excite a spirit of missionary zeal.

The *last* cause I mention is, that there was an unhesitating, an entire, and untiring consecration on the part of the ministers of the Gospel to this great work. They thought no other object was worth living for but the salvation of the soul: they sought no other object, they thought they had no other business in this world, but the salvation of the soul; and they wanted no other as an object for existence. No sacrifice, no ties, no labour, no self-denial, were too great to endure for this work. Literary retirement, philosophical leisure, bodily recreation, the ordinary routine of ministerial duty, entered not into their calculation: they lived for the salvation of immortal souls. And much as I think the professors of the present day are behind the professors of the first days—ministers, I think, of this age, are far more behind the ministers of that golden age of the Church. Oh the sublimity of discourse—oh the grasp of eternity—oh the hold upon truth, and the deadness to the world which were found in the men of those days!

My dear brethren, do let me entreat you to think of this matter. I am well pleased to see this crowded audience, because I would hope it is not a cold curiosity to hear a stranger that has brought you together. I am well pleased to see the meetings which are being held, from time to time, in this and other places. I am well pleased to hear the cause of missions set before us—not merely with the strains of magic genius, but, as it were, dipped and dyed in the colours of the Sun of Righteousness itself. I am well pleased to hear of accumulating funds, of extending missions, and the multiplication of missionaries. And now, brethren, what is wanting? Ah! let us all ask the question. *What is wanting?* What is wanting, but that the Church should arise and do her duty, in attaining to more eminent spirituality, and to more fervent prayer? I covet not the gloomy mysticism of the hermitage, the formal drudgery of the monastery, the extravagant fanaticism of the pilgrimage or the scourge: I want not these things to be seen amongst us. But I do want to see that those who call themselves disciples of Jesus Christ, should live more up to their profession. I do want to see in them more conspicuous marks of discipleship, the evidences of conversion, the signs of vitality. I want to see in their temper the mind of Christ, upon their character the stamp of heaven, and in their conduct the index of eternity. I do want to see them looking up to heaven as if they had something there, and soon expected to be there themselves. I do want to see the eye of faith glittering in the rays of the excellent glory, and the tongue of believers reverberating the sounds that come down from heaven. Oh forgive this earnestness, when I ask if Bristol Christians, if members of the churches here, if the professors of this city are alive to the power of God in their hearts. Are there any signs of revival among you, brethren? Let me ask in all affection and seriousness this question. Depend upon it the Church



must be revived before the world can be converted: Christ will come to his Church before he goes out to the world; he will come and clothe himself in the midst of his people with power and glory, before he goes out to the nations; he will come to the New Jerusalem, and then go out to the world. I am not speaking of the personal reign, or the visible display of his glory, in any other way than shall be seen in the heavenly temper and holy conduct of his disciples.

Here we must begin. No—I will correct that phrase. My dear brethren in the ministry, *it must begin with us*: that is the third particular. *If we would have the Church blessed, we must ask a blessing first on ourselves.* There is no man in existence on whose lips this prayer is more in place, there is none that can more effectually present it, than a Christian missionary: next to him comes the Christian minister. I said just now that the salvation of a soul is felt throughout the world. Brethren, that is our business: we have nothing else to do in this world, as an object of existence, than the salvation of souls. For this we were set apart by the Holy Ghost for the ministry; for this Christ sent us into his Church; this we professed to be our object in our ordination vows; this the Church expects from us, and so does the world. We are to be the men of one book—the Bible; of one idea—salvation; of one business—the conversion of souls. Others are going down occasionally into the valley of dry bones; *we dwell there*: they now and then prophesy; it is *our business*. Oh, I tremble for myself, and I tremble for you; I wonder at your indifference, and I wonder more at my own; I wonder that a sense of the value of souls does not take sleep often from our eyes, and slumber from our eyelids.

It is one of the mysteries of God's moral government, that he has made a matter of such transcendent importance as the salvation of souls, in a measure to depend on our influence on others: but so it is; how tremendous, then, is our responsibility! It is indeed no ordinary matter, to be an ambassador from the King of kings. Angels never had committed to them an embassy of such deep and everlasting moment: neither mortals nor immortals were ever entrusted with a commission so awful, and attended with such amazing consequences. My dear brethren, there is not one of all the thousands that hear our voices, but will take an impression from the voice they hear which will never wear out. Myriads in time to come may depend for their eternal welfare, in some measure, upon our instrumentality. There is no middle destiny for us: we are candidates for a higher seat in heaven, or we are going to a deeper abyss in hell, than others. Heaven and hell will for ever ring with the recited memorials of our ministry. Our work leads us directly to the altar; we go daily (where Nadab and Abihu went) to offer the sacrifice with sacred fire. My brethren, let us forget wife, let us forget children, let us forget everything, in order to minister in the fidelity of our souls for the service of Christ. Oh do, do, from this night, look again to your responsibility. There is something beyond the power of language to describe, or the imagination to conceive, in the tremendous responsibility of our office. Forgive me in speaking thus. I would stir up my own soul, as well as stir up yours, in all that has been said. Our people that are converted, as well as the unconverted, depend much upon our spirit, and tone, and temper. The expression so often thrown out in profanity and jest, is an awful truth—"Like priest, like people." We carry an



atmosphere with us, and we raise or depress the religious temperature of the community : we are icebergs to chill, or we are central fires to warm.

And as it respects the tone of our people in reference to the missionary cause, we have something to answer for to God. Not only are we answerable for our own efforts in the salvation of souls ; but for the efforts that are made by our very people. If they are dead and careless, is it not because we have not yet done all we ought to do to stir them up to this transcendantly important business ? Oh, let us consider that we are answerable to God for the religious and zealous tone and spirit of those that are committed to our charge. If, then, the Church is to be blessed, we must seek first a blessing on ourselves.

To bring the subject to a conclusion, I would remark, *that we must each, whether minister or hearer, take up the idea in reference to himself.* I must be blessed, in order that I may seek that others may be blessed through my instrumentality. Is there one in this assembly, one man or one woman, who has never sought mercy for himself or herself ? What ! at a missionary meeting, professing to seek the salvation of others, and never sought your own ? Oh, consider this—If on earth, or in any other world, there can be found so appalling an instance of awful inconsistency. Eternal God ! send from the clouds that surround thy throne a lightning flash of conviction into that sinner's heart, that he may to-night see his guilt, and flee for refuge to the hope set before him. Sinner, may that prayer be answered for thee. There is mercy if thou seek it : the God of mercy bends his ear to listen to thy cry. And what, shall there not be one here to-night that will say, "God be merciful to me a sinner ?" Why, so intent is God upon hearing such prayers, that, if he could not hear two things at once, he would command silence in heaven, and hush every voice and every harp of the celestial choir, that he might hear the cry of penitence and faith go up before his throne, asking for mercy. Go to-night and seek that mercy. The world never can be converted while thou art unconverted : thou stoppest the work, unconverted sinner. But oh ! if this night a soul should be converted, if *one* should be saved, what a triumph will there be in heaven among the angels of God ; what an accession to the means and instruments of converting others.

Ministers and Christians, *we are all too apt to generalize, too backward to particularize.* We lose ourselves in the crowd. We think the sermon directed to the congregation ; we divide it between the congregation, and the share that comes to ourselves is so small that it fails to move the heart, and leaves the conscience unassailed. We ought to feel that we are the object on which the preacher wishes to pour the full tide of his argument and persuasion.

Now let us each suppose, that upon us individually depended whether the Church should be revived and the world should be converted. Let us suppose we were the very centre of the moral interests of the globe ; that it depended on us individually whether the Gospel should go out and convert the nations, or whether they should continue in sin. If that idea could be conveyed into our minds, we should be so impressed, that, regardless of the thousand eyes that were looking on us, we should fall down in the midst of the congregation, and implore of God his grace to help us, that the misery of the world may not lie at our door. Why is not this supposition cherished by every man, by every

Christian ? It *does* depend upon us that the world is to be converted. Christian, there is thy country demanding an increase of piety in thy heart, that thou mayest be an instrument for sanctifying its greatness to the service of Christ. There is the Church demanding an increase of thy piety, that it may experience a revival. There is the world uttering loud and deep groans of misery, demanding an increase of your piety, that thou mayest be the instrument of its salvation. And above all, there is the Redeemer of the world looking down at this moment upon thy heart, and in immediate reference to the results of the judgment day, to see thine heart moved by appeals so numerous, arguments so weighty, a responsibility so tremendous.

I refer you to the judgment day ; that day when Christ shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him : that day when all nations shall be convulsed with terror, or wrapt in ecstasy at the vision of the Lamb : that day when all rich men shall stand at the bar of Christ, and give an account of every farthing of their property—what they have gained, what they have spent, what they have hoarded, what they have withheld, as well as what they have given : that day when all that is dear to avarice, to sensuality, to pride, to ambition, shall be seen wrapped in flames or reduced to ashes : that day when heaven and hell shall open to receive their own : that day when the shout of triumph from the right hand of the Judge, and the shriek of terror from the left, shall proclaim that nothing is left that is valuable but salvation. Oh Christian, look to that day ; anticipate the designs of that day. Anticipate what thou wilt then wish thou hadst given to, and done for, the cause of Christ ; and let that anticipation decide thee as thou now puttest thy hand into thy pocket to draw out the offering which is to be consecrated to Christ : and let the anticipation of that day decide thy conduct on every day that is to intervene between the present and the consummation of all things.

## PERSEVERANCE IN ATTAINING THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

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“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”—HOSEA, vi. 3.

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THERE cannot be a more interesting question, than that simple one which is asked in the catechism of the sister Church in the sister country. That question is, “What is the chief end of man?” Perhaps there may be many within these sacred walls, who never seriously pondered the question. Such persons, therefore, must be passing on through life, without having ever considered what is the end of man—what is the object towards which they should be continually pressing, and for the attainment of which they should devote all their powers. They are thus like a vessel abroad on the ocean, without a haven to which it is steering, and how can they ever hope to find the haven of eternal repose?

But in the decision of the question, there is, indeed, fearful danger lest we should mistake what *is* “the chief end of man.” Is it merely to eat and to drink, to sleep and to die? Is it merely to accumulate riches, to pamper self? Is it merely to provide for his family, and to get raiment and food? Is it merely to gratify ambition, or to pursue the phantom of amusement? Yes, if man be but the creature of a day, who has no existence beyond the present, and no hope beyond what this world can offer. But if you admit that man is an eternal being, his spirit as deathless as the God that gave it—that man has the destiny of futurity before him, and that it must be determined by his conduct here; that here the gulf is formed that shall be fixed for ever—then, surely, the answer to the question must be one, must be obvious: it is this—to know, to love, to please, to serve, to enjoy God for ever. That is the one vast end of man, for which he was made; and, therefore, if it be not accomplished, the end of his creation is defeated, and his own soul is lost.

The beautiful words I have read from the prophet Hosea, afford rich encouragement to those who, convinced that such is the end of man, desire to set out in good earnest, in attaining that great object—the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God. “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”

The words will lead me in the first place, to shew you, that if we would know God, we must follow on to know him; and, in the next place, that in following on to know the Lord, we have every assurance that our labour cannot be in vain. May his Spirit guide us into the knowledge of his truth.

**TO KNOW GOD REQUIRES THAT MEN SHOULD SEEK TO KNOW HIM.**  
The knowledge of the Most High is not instinctive and intuitive. Time was,

when it was thus with man: in his unfallen condition, he knew instinctively, as he spontaneously obeyed God: and had man begotten a race like himself, while in this state, no doubt his posterity, from reason's first dawn to life's last step, would have had a clear understanding of God, as far as man could understand him, and would have known all respecting God that it was interesting and important to man to know.

But the world by wisdom now knoweth not God; though he be not far from any one of us, seeing that in him we live, and move, and have our being. And though we have to do with him in every action, in every thought, in every relationship, and in every engagement, yet he is not remembered, and he is not recognised by us. Though the invisible things of him may be seen in the things that are created, even his eternal power and Godhead; yet who is there, naturally, unaided by light from above, reads the characters in the book of creation, that describe and discover God? And even though we have his Word of Truth, which reveals him—not dimly and darkly as does the volume of creation—but fully, in his own light and glory, as manifest in his Son, brought down to our capacities, and home to our thoughts; yet still the knowledge of the Word of God is not an obvious and an easy thing; it does not all at once flash the truth on the mind of man. If we would know God, we must seek to know him: and the man whose knowledge of God has come, he knows not how, has come to him without any thought, without any solicitude, without any deep attention, without any application of his mind—that man may be assured that his knowledge of God is a false, is a fictitious, is an insufficient, is an unscriptural knowledge. And we may be equally sure, that if we have not been led to learn that to know God is the first great thing that concerns us, compared with which our fortune, our family, our health, our life itself, is not to be mentioned—if we have never been brought to esteem the knowledge of God at something like what the great Apostle estimated it, when he said, “Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;” we have never sought for it in good earnest, as it requires, and as it must be sought, if ever it is to be found by us. Therefore, Christian brethren, you may settle it as a point, that alike commends itself to reason and is borne out by Scripture, that if we would know God, we must seek to know him.

How strange it is that men should think to know God and religion without diligence, whilst they think not to know any human science or profession without application, and diligence, and exertion! Does the medical man expect to attain to wisdom in his important pursuits, without days of labour and nights of thought? Does the merchantman expect all at once to get acquainted with the principles of commerce? Must he not pass through its regular course of discipline and instruction, before he can be prepared and qualified for the part that he is to fill? Would to God that men were as wise for eternity as they are for time; and felt that it is just as needful and essential, if a man would become wise to salvation, that he should give application and diligence, as it is for a man to become wise unto any pursuit, or any purpose, in this present life! Your own selves will rise up in judgment against yourselves, if you have given to time so much thought and attention, and to eternity so little; if you have given to this world the best of your energies, and powers, and affections, and given to the Saviour who died to redeem you, and to the eternity that is before you, so little of attention, and so little desire, application, and reflection!



But it is not merely that we should give diligence in order to know God ; but it is also necessary that we should *follow on* to know him. The progress of the Christian is as the morning light, brightening gradually to perfect day ; and assuredly no Christian man ever shall enter heaven, that hath not advanced, step by step, in the path to knowledge, obedience, and peace. If we would ask what is the grand crowning grace of the Christian—what is the test and touchstone of his sincerity that is infallible ; we should at once answer, constant perseverance. If a man persevere onward to the end—faithful to death—he shall obtain the crown of life. But however fast and fair a man runs, if at last he halts, and never resumes the race—however much the man may have expended in seeking eternal life, if, after all, he makes shipwreck of the truth—what will it avail him ? To him that overcometh, the promise of eternal life is made : and to know God in any degree of confidence and peace, to know him thus in a dying hour, to know in whom we have trusted, and to be thoroughly persuaded that he is able to keep what we have committed to him—we must follow on to know him.

Beloved brethren, I do beseech you in the name of God, and as you value your own souls, keep this in mind. Alas ! how many are there over whom the Christian minister must mourn when he sees them, as Christ saw many of his disciples—turn back and following him no more. And what is the secret cause ? They have not been prepared to go all lengths with their Saviour : they have not been disposed, and made up their minds to “count all things but dung, so that they may win Christ, and be found in him.” The novelty of religion—the mere influence of truth at first on their minds—the external source of excitement that the ministry of the word may furnish—the intercourse with Christian people, which at first may exert some effect upon them—these external sources of interest and influence, become familiarized, lose their effect ; and then, if there be not the root of the matter—and then, if he be not led of the Spirit of God—if the man be not walking by faith, but by sight—if he hath not sat down and counted the cost, and seen that it would profit him nothing to gain the whole world and lose his own soul—assuredly he will become wearied in well-doing ; he will begin to halt, to waver, to listen to temptation, to tamper with the world, to turn aside to political pursuits, or to give to his secular calling his whole soul, and become absorbed in it, or turn aside to vanities and amusements : in some way or other, he will gradually turn back ; and if he throw not off the entire apparel of the Christian, he will still wear it as a form, without the power of God, having a name to live while he is dead.

Christian brethren, whatever you do, follow on to know the Lord. It is not many miscarriages, it is not many discouragements, it is not many abortive efforts, it is not many ineffectual attempts, that will bring the man short of eternal life : but it is a man failing to rise again, however he falls ; failing to persist, however he is disappointed ; failing to wait, however he is kept as though God heard him not : it is the giving up the pursuit of Christ—having just put his hand to the plough, finally to look back—that will cause a man to make shipwreck of his eternal all. But, short of this, if a man does but persist—if he does but persevere through every change of circumstances—if he does but persevere amidst the power of temptation—if he does but “follow on” to know the Lord, then there shall be given him every encouragement that Scripture can furnish, to assure him that his “labour shall not be in vain.”

I pass, then, to point out, **THE ENCOURAGEMENT AS IT IS HERE SO VIVIDLY**

PORTRAYED. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

"Then shall we know." And who hath spoken it? God who cannot lie—who can enlighten the darkest mind, enlarge the most circumscribed understanding, elevate the most grovelling, and enlighten the most dark. No understanding so obtuse, but he can whet it; no memory so weak, but he can strengthen it; no heart so straitened but he can enlarge it; no evil habits so inveterate, but he can change them or rend them asunder. If He that spake first at creation's dawn, and said, "Let there be light," and there was light—if He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and bade the light of the Gospel to shine into the sinner's soul—if He makes the promise, "Ye shall know," then heaven and earth may pass away, but that promise shall not pass away; and every one that seeks its fulfilment, shall have it accomplished. Every one that asks on shall receive; and he that seeketh on must find; and he that knocketh on, and will take no denial, must have the door of mercy opened to him. If any man, therefore, lack wisdom, let him ask of God; let him still ask, and still wait at Wisdom's gate, and still lift up his voice and cry after Understanding, and seek for her as for fine gold, and dig for her as for hidden treasure: then shall he know the fear of the Lord; then shall he know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, whom to know is life eternal: for he himself has declared, "If you continue in my words, then shall you be my disciple indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

And then, as if God by the prophet would still more impress this gracious assurance on our minds, he adds two beautiful figures, to make it yet more plain and striking to us. And it is no small mercy that God should thus graciously seek to assure us that we should know him: for there is nothing that will so effectually prevent a man to "follow on" as despairing in his pursuit. The mariner in the storm will still endeavour to guide the helm, and still urge on his way, while there is hope of reaching the haven: but once let hope give way, and his hand drops powerless, his heart fails him, and he gives himself up despairingly to die. So nothing will lead the Christian mariner still to urge on his vessel heavenward, but a full and firm impression that God who cannot lie, will not disappoint his expectation—cannot let his labour be in vain with respect to him. To this end, therefore, God adds line upon line, and precept upon precept. "*His going forth is prepared as the morning.*" You know, my brethren, that, however long and gloomy the night may be, if you are watching by the death-bed of a sick friend, and saying, "Would God it were morning;" or if, tossing yourselves on a bed of anguish, you are led to ask, "Oh, for the light of the day to break in and shorten the time of my pain;" or if you are lost in a wilderness, and seeking to spy out a gleam of light that might lead you into the right path: however gloomy the night might have been, however the black clouds might hinder the sun from breaking in upon you—still you would say, "The morning must come: God has ordained that the morning should follow the night; and, however long and dark the previous gloom, the morning must come." Now, so is it declared here: as the morning of the day is sure to come to the afflicted and weary who wait for it, so surely shall the morning, the day-spring from on high, the day-spring from heaven, the day-spring of salvation,

visit the souls that shall wait for it, and who can say with the Psalmist, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning." Then "his going forth prepared as the morning." It comes, it has its appointed time: it may tarry; but wait for it, for at the last it *shall* come, and will not tarry. Heard you ever of one who died without finding God, although he had made it the work of his life to seek him? Heard you ever of one who declared on his death-bed, "I sought God all my life, and sought him in vain?" No; we may search all the records of death-bed scenes, and we shall never find one who bore testimony to the faithlessness of God. Thousands have written against themselves, and borne testimony to the madness of seeking other happiness, and making other things the grand end and aim of life. But never did you hear of a man on his death-bed bewailing that he had trusted God, and that God had deceived him—that he had followed God, and that God had proved a faithless friend at last. No; "his going forth is prepared as the morning:" and though the morning may linger long before it come, and though the clouds may long darken the hopes of God's people, still the morning of hope does break in on the night of their sorrow and distress; still it is "prepared" for them, and will come when it is most adapted for their good, even when God sees fit; and "the times and the seasons are in his hands."

Brethren, how beautiful is the figure! "The morning." How beautiful is the morning! How joyfully it comes, after the dark night, to the traveller, or the shipwrecked mariner! At once his fears are changed into hopes, and his sorrows into joys. And so when the morning of peace and pardon dawns—the Sun of Righteousness arising on the sinner's soul, with healing in his wings—oh, then he has "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness:" then, indeed, is his "mouth filled with laughter," and his tongue with joy; as saith the Psalmist—"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." Yes, he comes like the morning to cheer the weary penitent who has waited long, who has begun perhaps to despair. It may have been darkness with him; but at last it comes, and then he feels that it was well to wait, and that his waiting is infinitely repaid.

The gracious knowledge and blessing of God, we are assured, shall "*come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth:*" like the rain in those eastern countries where it comes in the spring-time, when the seed is sown, to make it spring up, and make the furrows bring forth the tender blade; and where it comes again toward the harvest time, to fill the ear with its corn, and to mature the grain and fit it for the sickle. Thus shall grace come on them that "follow on to know the Lord;" in the outset of their career to water the seed of eternal life, to make it spring up, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear: and it shall again come on them in their old age, so that they shall in advanced life bring forth fruit, and be "fat and flourish, ing." So that they who "follow on to know the Lord," shall not want either the rain in the spring-time, or at the harvest. And thus, not losing a full reward—thus preparing for an abundant entrance into heaven, they shall be found as a shock of corn in its season, abundant with the glorious grain, fully ripe, and ready to be gathered in. Oh, let us die the death of such an one, and let our last end be like his! May we "follow on," triumphing over every

difficulty, undeterred by every danger, victorious over every foe, standing against every seduction—buying the truth, and never selling it—having salvation, and never making shipwreck of it.

Beloved brethren, I speak to those whose religion costs them nothing, and who take it for granted that they must go to heaven. Where did you learn that? Who told you it? Did God tell you it? Did the Bible tell you it? Did it cost the Saviour nothing to redeem you? And has he told you it must cost you nothing to obtain the benefits of his redemption? The world told you it; but it lies: Satan told you it; but he is a liar, and the father of lies. Your own hearts told you it; but they are “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Oh, never venture your eternal all upon the mere broken reed, the mere straw of a peradventure, that you may hope to be saved without “entering in at the strait gate,” without “putting off the old man with his affections and lusts,” without “fighting the good fight,” without “running the race that is set before us.” Oh, the madness of a man resting his eternal all on such a peradventure! But a peradventure it is not: it is an egregious falsehood; it is a palpable delusion, that would not deceive a man for a moment in an ordinary worldly matter; and yet he allows it to cheat his own soul.

Let me further tell you, that, if you would know God, you must set about it in the right way; not to know him by the mere light of your understanding—not to know him from the writings of men—not to know him merely from the book of nature. But go simply to the precious Book, which is full of the knowledge of God. Go as a sinner to the Saviour, to know God as a Father—a just God, and yet a Saviour, revealed in him. Go to the throne of grace with full confidence in your Father as willing to hear you; and ask for his Spirit of truth to guide you into all truth. And then “*follow on* to know the Lord.” Resist the first disposition to become cold and languid. Resist the first seduction that would lead you off from making salvation your primary pursuit. Keep the world and the things of it in their own subordinate place. Follow the world, but do not serve it; use it, but do not abuse it: ever keep its business in the place where God would have it kept, as a scene of discipline and trial in which you may glorify God, and serve your fellow-creatures in your day and generation. But never let your business take the place of your salvation; nor give to the trifles of time, the interest due to the realities of eternity.

Christian brethren, let none despair. Are you indeed “following on to know the Lord?” Does it seem as if you made no progress—as if the clouds returned after the rain—as if the twilight was long, and no star of promise broke in to tell that the dawn was near? If so, is there not a cause? Are you willing to take Christ on his own terms? Are you willing to esteem his reproach greater riches than the treasures of this world? Are you willing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? If you say, “I am, as far as I know myself: I trust in God;” then wait upon the Lord, and again I say wait: for it is beautifully declared, “It is good that a man quietly wait and patiently hope for the salvation of God.” For you *shall* know him. Sooner shall the morning fail to rise to-morrow—sooner shall the sun fail to come forth from his chamber as a bridegroom to run his race—sooner shall no spring break in on the approaching winter when the season comes—than God fail to visit with life, and light, and glory, the soul that follows on to know him.



## ETERNAL WISDOM REJOICING IN THE EVENTS TO BE REVEALED.

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"Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men."—PROVERBS, viii. 30, 31.

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You will remember, my brethren, that this is a speech ascribed in this sacred book to "wisdom." Our interpretation of the sentiment thus presented before us, will, however, be materially modified by the view which we take of the proper import of that phrase, as adopted, not in this place only, but throughout the book. We may either understand it as intended to personify the character of the Most High, bearing this appellation; or we may regard it as being indeed only another name for Him who is the faithful and true Witness, the power and the wisdom of God together; who, being in the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, when he had by the word of his power, and the exercise of his own wisdom, formed all things out of nothing, constituted, ordained, arranged, and ordered all things, then presented himself afterwards before that creation he had made, arrayed in the human form, and now dwells in light and glory (though still possessing the same exterior lineaments, and the same immediate relation to humanity), to receive the homage and reverence of all the hosts of heaven.

We may, therefore, according to these two interpretations, contemplate the words before us, first with an inferior, and next, we apprehend, both with a more legitimate, as well as a more exalted species of interest and delight. Let us, however, read once again, that this may appear unquestionable, the important language which stands connected with the words of the text: let us read from the twenty-second verse, and consider this two-fold reference silently and solemnly: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing

always before him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ; and my delights were with the sons of men."

But besides that there seems to us an incongruity in the representation of wisdom as having been at any period "brought forth," (provided that wisdom is supposed to mean the attribute of the great and eternal Mind—if it be intended in any other sense, or be interpreted otherwise, than that it was manifest and came forth in development before the universe ; which was clearly and obviously impossible in the circumstances referred to in this passage, forasmuch as there were then no observers, no witnesses, and none to whom such development could be afforded)—besides the fact, that that glorious and infinite attribute of God, wisdom, appears to us to be properly associated with himself in the inherent depths, and the intimacy of his own existence, inherent in himself, and inseparable from him, and therefore that there appears an incongruity and impropriety in representing it as detached and separate, and operating alone—besides the fact, that it would seem to us to be improper, and in every way destitute of emphasis and force, to represent this wisdom as "set up from everlasting and from the beginning, or ever the earth was;" and, more especially, to represent such wisdom as delighting in the anticipation of the great end which it would itself secure ; the boldness of the figure, and the extent of the personification, besides that they either seem to outrage our conception of the accuracy of the sentiment and the truth of the case, appear to us to be such as to induce us to regard the words, as rather indicative of Him who is indeed the wisdom of God, and who presented before us, and before the universe, its noblest, brightest, and most glorious manifestations, assumes this honour, and claims it as his own—Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. We therefore, my brethren, shall, in the residue of this discourse, after we have first briefly exhibited before you the lesser, or the less energetic, mode whereby to contemplate these words, regard them according to this apprehension of their meaning, which we conceive is the proper guide rightly to understand nearly every portion of this important treatise.

Let us suggest it to you, my brethren, as matter to be hereafter examined in your own study of Scripture, that there is very much throughout the whole of the book of Proverbs ascribed to wisdom, which cannot be regarded, with propriety, as attaching to a simple attribute. Moreover that wisdom stands associated with ends, and aims, and objects, which are certainly by no means the results of wisdom alone ; and that there is a degree of grandeur and elevation about the presentation of this character, which seems to point, inferentially and indirectly, at the Eternal Son of the Most High. Let then this, as a suggestion, dwell in your minds : pursue the inquiries in secret which it presents to you, and you will perceive that there is a fulness of beauty and energy given to very many portions of this valuable book (which, if the simple attribute of wisdom were to be regarded as detached from the person of Him in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, would be found utterly wanting) instead of that exaggerating and imperfect measure of emphasis frequently employed, in relation to that which ought to have been found associated, perhaps, with other attributes than those which stand forth singly and alone.

But even if we were to take this inferior view of the case, and were to regard

the wisdom of God, the wisdom of the great Supreme, as a mere attribute of his character, as being thus represented, we should be led, we apprehend, by it to very interesting reflections in relation to this human system, to which it is represented as continually directed from eternity. For the wisdom of the great God, before even the sea received its decree from his mouth, before the waters were forbidden to pass his commandment, before he had appointed the foundations of the earth—that wisdom is represented as the delight of God, “rejoicing always before him” in this particular reference—“rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and having its delights with the sons of men.”

If we contemplate thus the character of divine wisdom as directed to earth, dwelling amongst men, anticipating the concerns, and circumstances, and history of this human world, we shall be led to *perceive an importance attaching to all the ramifications of that history*, to all its epochs and all its events, otherwise perhaps improperly ascribed to it. We shall, besides, contemplate our own condition as in immediate connexion with those great issues which are thus to call forth the alone wisdom of God, and which give to that wisdom so glorious an exercise, as it is presented before us, rejoicing and exulting in the review. We shall contemplate, I say, our own particular circumstances in connexion with this event, as having an importance and a greatness which induces us to “gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober, and hope to the end for the grace which is to be revealed in us,” when all the issue of that wisdom shall be finally attained.

In addition to this, we shall be led to *depend, with a degree of delight and joy, on all the arrangements and developments of this wisdom in relation to our circumstances*. If we contemplate it as from everlasting, and regard the thoughts of God as concentrated on us from eternity, we shall learn to apprehend that there is nothing little, nothing of trifling importance, in the circumstances of human nature, and the whole of its events; but that, on the contrary, all was fore-ordained and arranged with such reference to propriety and truth, as to accomplish, with infallibility, with an infinite certainty, all which God designs.

In addition to this, we shall perceive *the impropriety of our murmuring*; and that there is the greatest measure of folly, as well as of danger, in allowing ourselves to dispute any part of the divine proceedings. If we contemplate them as at the moment brought into operation, not as meeting exigences which were not foreseen, and not as adapted to remove difficulties or hindrances out of the way of the divine procedure, for which no previous preparation had been arranged; but, on the contrary, as having been all presented to the view and contemplation of the Eternal Mind, before the very first part of this universal fabric had been created, before its very foundations had been laid, or before “the highest part of the dust of the world” was brought into existence—we shall delight ourselves to perceive that the attempt to resist that wisdom is not in itself more perilous than it is unwise; we shall yield ourselves to its discipline with a calm acquiescence; we shall learn true wisdom in submission; and the obedience, not merely of our belief in the perfect goodness of God, but our absolute acquiescence in every part of the divine arrangements, will enable us to meet those arrangements in the present life, and their issue in the life of glory hereafter.

In addition to this, such a view of the case will induce us to *look with intelli-*

*gent and instructed minds, upon all the things around us*, and to observe in the various circumstances which transpire before our view, the actual working out of a plan arranged from eternity. The natural result will be, that we shall see the mind of God exhibited in living images, and presented before us in manifest development. We shall continually observe that whereon the thoughts of God are fixed; and in observing how those thoughts are brought out into actual manifestation, we shall learn to think with him. Thus shall we acquire a familiarity with his mind, as well as with his general purposes; with his mode of operation, as well as his design: and this will be to hold firm fellowship with him as the Father of our spirits, and be prepared for that fellowship which is far more noble, when we shall see him as he is, and dwell eternally with him in the light of his presence.

In addition to this, the contemplation of the great Supreme, as having been perpetually in exercise, will induce us to regard him, not only with this constant converse with the purposes of his mind, but likewise *with deep solicitude, in order that we ourselves may be brought to see the truth and results of all that is around us*; forasmuch as we shall perceive that this is nothing more than a detailed exhibition of what from eternity existed in the mind of God; and what, therefore, if transferred to ourselves, will cause us to rise to the highest degree to which it is possible that any creature can attain, of correspondence of feeling and of habit with himself. And hence our security and joy. For if it were the object of his delight to contemplate it before hand, we shall see it must become, in the same degree that our spirits are elevated into consonance with his, our delight, as it is brought before our view; and we shall thus, not only attain to that wondrous elevation of which I have already spoken, that sublime and almost fearful altitude of thought wherein we are permitted to think with the Eternal, but we shall participate in the very joys, and in the glowing delights of that Mind in which it finds the plenitude of its eternal satisfaction.

In addition to this, you will perceive, that in the degree wherein we ascribe to the eternal wisdom this immediate foreknowledge of all the events of this world, together with the delight and joy consistent with its purity and perfection, *we shall anticipate the glory of that scene in its fulness, which we now perceive in fragments*. That which we see but in its passage—that which we attain to the information of, precisely as they can who look on some part of some great procession, the beginning and the end of which they could not apprehend, but one individual portion of which was singly presented to their minds—we may anticipate to enjoy, when the whole shall pass before us, when all shall be unveiled in the measure wherein it is good that the designs of the Creator shall be revealed to his creatures. Thus if the joy of the Divine and Infinite Mind be that of wisdom rejoicing—that of wisdom rejoicing in anticipation of the events which shall be revealed to us in history, we see the character of celestial bliss; we attain some conception of the nature of heaven, and are prepared to look back, through that vista of eternal ages, through which the prescience of God is represented as looking onward; and thus partake of the felicity reflected from the breast of the Eternal, and those enjoyments, emanating from the depths of his own essence; and thus, throughout the long ages through which we shall evermore delight in this contemplation, become familiar with these elemental issues, and enter into the joy of our Lord.



Let us contemplate with what propriety then, even, as I have said, in this less energetic form, we may ascribe to the divine wisdom this anticipated delight of looking forward to the production of the world. There is enough assuredly, my brethren, written under this aspect, to justify the representation; and the only complaint it would be possible to make of the interpretation which should here find its end, would be, that it left that infinitely behind which it undertook to measure; and that there was an infinite discrepancy and inferiority on the part of the interpretation, as compared with the object it had assumed to interpret. But when we think of the mind of the great God viewing from eternity all that was to be, and fixing, in its wisdom, upon this human world, there are a variety of objects now springing up to our view at once, of a nature to represent this single and glorious attribute as delighting—having the fulness of its satisfaction and repose—in this contemplation and anticipation from eternity. Let us think only of the marvellous structure of the human constitution; let us contemplate this wondrous, this mysterious, this marvellous form, in which we ourselves are found: let us only contemplate that strange concurrence of the most extreme and opposite of all characters of being; and let us notice how they coalesce; how they blend in an intimate, and, as it seems to us, inseparable union. Let us only meditate upon ourselves for an instant; and we shall stand astonished at our condition, and feel ourselves a world of wonders. All that the universe presents of grandeur, all that it represents to us of beauty, all which it sets before us of skill, all that it teaches us of goodness, seems to meet and centre here. For what can be more illustrious and glorious than the human intellect? I do not say from its extent, but its essence; I speak not of its acquisitions, but its powers; I speak not of its present, but its future condition—of its destiny enstamped so brightly on its brow—a glory which seems to come into immediate contact, even with the being of God, and to be the most inimitable and the most beautiful of all our conceived images of his own invisible and eternal essence. I do not say there may not be spirits on high of a loftier order, that there may not be intellects which are greater than our own; I would not measure the degree in which we are accustomed to stand astonished at angels which excel in strength and surpass in wisdom, and who inhabit eternity in the light and the fulness of those joys which are at God's right hand for evermore; but I would speak of this wondrous, this astonishing combination of powers, which at least have alliance with theirs, or if not with theirs, with His who is infinitely beyond them, and yet which stands in union with them, to exist throughout eternal ages with a body fashioned from the dust, and with liabilities which are so numerous, to all the ills and changes, and various evils belonging to our mortal state, and, at the same time, to all those complicated forms of evil which are fitted to develop its powers, and exhibit its resources. In the very body alone, with which we stand thus intimately connected, what forms of beauty, what exquisite adaptation, what propriety, in regard both to figure and use—what perfection of structure! In what manner do we perceive every faculty raised to its highest degree of excellence and loveliness, the most complete in itself, the most adapted to its designs, the most various, and certainly the most wonderful. If this single body were presented to us, and it stood alone, we might well regard it as a fit object, not only for the contemplation of all other minds, but for the contemplation of the mind of Him who made it,

before the supremacy of its beauty had been beheld by the wondering universe, and before even the least conception in regard to its use might arise in the procession of his purposes.

We might regard it, however, my brethren, with more delight, if we contemplate it as eternally associated with that mind which it enshrouds, but which, by and by, will attain to a higher degree of felicity and glory than now; with a body at present mortal—then deathless; now allied to dust—then dwelling amidst the abodes of heaven for ever, and like to them celestial; now of the earth, earthy—then spiritual, and like the soul that tenants it now. We are not to imagine, that even in eternity, this body, so curiously fashioned, so beautiful in itself, and having such varieties of uses, shall not possess the peculiarities and excellences corresponding to the wisdom here described. It is true it is subject to affliction, and change, and death; but then it shall be a living monument of its Creator's skill. Here is not merely a great variety of purposes, orders, and organs; here is not merely an adaptation of parts, and a co-operation of each several impulse, and influence, and agency, to the attainment of one grand end; but here is likewise a ministration above and beyond them all, to the condition of the immortal mind. We frequently regard it as degraded; we speak of it—without a right apprehension of the probable use, and of the intention of the Apostle in using the phrase—as a “vile body,” as a cast-off garment, which it would be well for us to lay down in the dust, and to rise to pure spirituality, to the state of the disembodied soul, immortal in the presence of its Creator. We have forgotten that the day is coming when the greatest height of our glory shall be, that we are “the children of the resurrection;” we shall inhabit a body raised from death and the grave; we shall dwell, not merely in a house not made with hands, but in *this* house, fabricated with the highest skill, by the hands of the Great Artificer. We, with these eyes, shall behold him; with these ears shall listen to his voice: these hands shall be stretched forth to grasp his various gifts and impartations: these breasts shall throb eternally with higher and yet higher joy, while we gaze eternally on his glory, while we drink of the river of his delights: these hearts, pulsating now with delight, shall vibrate with boundless delight and holy triumph, when we see all things earthly pass away except this, which was itself once earthly, now made indeed celestial and almost divine, inasmuch as we have now become, not only the residence of the Eternal Son of God in human flesh, and possessing all the characteristics in which he now dwells for ever, but also inasmuch as they possess within them imperishable spirits, redeemed by that precious blood, and dwelling for ever in the emanations of that uncreated radiance.

And we may regard ourselves as possessing a combination of excellency and wisdom in our being, even in reference to this very body, when we shall have passed through this preliminary station, when all which is mortal shall have passed away, when all that is perishable shall have perished, and all which cannot die shall be developed in its glory and perfection for ever. We may regard ourselves as standing amid the glory and beauty of the admiring angels of heaven for ever; as having a two-fold image of our Creator—like theirs in intellect, like ourselves in materiality; like to theirs in glory and purity, but like to our own in all the special circumstances which arise from the perfected bliss that resides in these organs. And thus even with regard to man, when

we contemplate that the creation of God has here attained its highest elevation, as a consequence, the wisdom of God exhibited in man may well be conceived as having looked onwards to this as its last act, and as the most beautiful of all its most wondrous and various manifestations, the masterpiece of its work, when, as on the great Sabbath, he having created all things, and then man, beheld them, and delighted in them as good, the fulness of his own eternal beatitude reposed in his eternal contemplation.

Let us observe how the mortal seems to become immortal, and the immortal for a season assumes the aspect of mortality. They are blended; they are combined; they are become apparently one; and it should seem almost another order of nature, when we see how, in relation to the circumstances of their condition, they are for ever to be associated with each other. For what is it now thinks, and feels, and acts within us? We speak of this body, and in our ordinary language include the very conception which he who would attempt to define it is incapable of doing, that there is another and a higher principle than that which he calls mind, and that he denominates as my individual being, and that which is my own, appendant to my existence, subject to my control, and capable of being separated from my being. All this, however, my brethren, when we come to apply to it the only proper rule—human consciousness; when we bring to it the only proper rule of adjudication, our own internal feelings with regard to the operations of our own nature; we feel to be a refinement great and beautiful, and unquestionably connected with the essence of our being, but still losing sight of the peculiarity of our being, of those first and special circumstances, all which are obviously intended to connect our mind with the operation of our body; so that we cannot say, where is the residence of the soul, or what the immediate mode of its impartation to this material form; but, on the contrary, it appears as if it dwelt within it, and gave to it all the animation and power belonging essentially to itself; and, as a consequence, arrayed that dust of the earth which was fashioned by the Eternal into the first man, in that which is so beautifully represented to have been its primitive character, when it is said, he “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”

This, however, is not all; we are to contemplate the special peculiarities of the minds of men. We are to consider, that the faculties of the mind are progressive, and pass from infancy to maturity, and from maturity on earth to the higher maturity in heaven: whereas, for all we know, the glorious spirits above, in that cloudless firmament, are not enhancing glory, and otherwise increasing in knowledge and power; that, applying their minds to the objects which have perpetually engaged them, they are perpetually gratifying those desires of delight, and interest, and wisdom, but still growing not in their capacity, but still perpetually the same in their own inherent vigour; applying only these, in order that under diversity of form they may enjoy happiness, and so render continual glory to their Creator.

We are to contemplate the special affections which belong to man. The affections of the human heart, we have every reason to believe, dwell here alone; that in the breast of man there is a depth of interest which induces a feeling of sympathy with the joys and sorrows of another. We only have sorrows of heart together, which angels cannot feel for angels, inasmuch as there is no



specific application of it on the part of angels; and which assuredly angels cannot feel for men, inasmuch as, elevated into a different scene of being, they have other modes of apprehension and feeling. And let us remember, that these feelings are raised almost into divine, now that we come into association with Him who dwells in light, who wears our form, who looks forth on the brightness and blessedness of heaven with a human countenance and a human eye. Let us remember that this sympathy, which is so felt flowing forth from him from eternity, we shall perpetually feel in constantly renewed and reinstated vigour throughout the ages of eternity, with all the diversities of the essence of our existence in the scenes of our emotions. Let us remember, it is on earth alone that such peculiar relations have their existence. The tender names of father, of mother, and of child, have here alone their dwelling, and all which they indicate dwells here only in its force of interest and reality. How then, if God be a Father—as he has been pleased by communication to represent himself—how must he, even in eternity, who filleth all in all with his emanations, have delighted to look upon it all under this parental character, parental care, parental solicitude, parental foresight, parental fidelity, all as a beauteous image of himself, and all as intended to prepare man, by the peculiar relation thus sustained, for dwelling in an immediate and more delightful approximation to himself in the world on high, than possibly other spirits, not thus fitted, and not thus naturally related, may have had.

We may well believe that the Providence springing out of all these various things—a Providence which not only controls the rise and fall of empires, but which, likewise, preserves even the sparrow in its flight, and yet numbers the hairs of our head—that the Providence which, in order to control the events and circumstances of all man's history, it is necessary to be brought into perpetual operation, must have furnished, even in anticipation to the mind of the great God, a theme of the highest emotion and delight, which it is possible he could enjoy; looking onwards to the other parts of his creation, in recollecting how those eternal powers would operate, so glorious, so blissful, and almost divine, he must have foreseen at once the total amount of their issues. But when we are taught, with regard to Providence, that his thoughts are numberless concerning us—when we are told they are new every morning, and renewed every evening—when we are led to contemplate him, as fixing his regard and his gaze upon us, as if continually waiting to do us good; we cannot but perceive that all this must have been to him, a subject most bright and glorious.

And here, my brethren, let me entreat you to correct an error into which we are prone to fall, arising, no doubt, from too great an elevation in our mode of contemplating the mere essence of God. We are accustomed to think of God, and even to speak of him, as if there was no change in him: I do not say in his being alone; that is true: but in apprehension and thought, for that unquestionably is false. We speak of him as if he dwelt in an eternal *now*; and we contemplate that *now*, as to his actions and feelings, in relation to the past, the present, and the future; and thereby, not as to his state and in himself: but as to the mere acts of his power, and greatness, and glory, and wisdom, we literally reduce the eternity of his being to an eternal moment. We, as the consequence of supposing that there is no change, no succession, in the thoughts, any more than in the absolute being of God, lose sight of a thousand things



most interesting and valuable to ourselves, in connexion with our relation to him and our dependency upon him. And it is impossible, therefore, to enter into the import of the Scriptural exclamation, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." And we must, as a consequence, my brethren, not only fail in attaining to a right apprehension of the divine care and forethought, in regard to all our present circumstances, but we must fail in returning to him that recompense of gratitude and delight, which can be the only reward he asks for what he bestows, and the only return it is possible for us to make to him. But if we would contemplate, that all things are beheld by God according to their true character, that the present is not the past, and neither the past nor the present are the future; that the present, and the past, and the future, are literally distinct from each other; that the events of yesterday are past, and that the events of to-morrow are to come; and that the Eternal Mind must necessarily look upon to-day and to-morrow as being, what they are, successive to each other; we may therefore be able to attain to a conception of the perpetuation of occupation upon the part of that Eternal Mind, in casting the projects of the universal history of mankind. We may thus regard ourselves as being brought into a nearer approach to a conception of the mode whereby God thinks, and plans, and purposes, or as to the immediate apprehensions and operations of the infinite mind of the Creator: recollecting, moreover, that to arrange before hand all which shall be, is the noblest manifestation of that energy which worketh all in all. It is not that he in the act of thinking wills, and in the act of willing creates, and in the act of creating places before himself that which shall be; but it is that he arranges it in regard to all their administration and all their succession. And there was time enough, my brethren, in that long, in that past eternity, and there were epochs sufficient in those days of everlasting, for him to have fixed his specific regard on every single soul that should be created afterwards; then upon every event in the history of that separate soul; then upon every individual circumstance bearing on it; then upon every circumstance which was placing it in jeopardy or in safety; then on every emotion to which it might be liable; then on every attainment to which it should aspire; then in the fulness of its glory on every part of that recompense with which it shall be finally crowned. And thus we may contemplate, that a period has been in eternity, as well as now, in which each separate mind within these walls, and each separate feeling of that mind, has been specifically and peculiarly present as for that particular moment: although, it is true, it is impossible for us to say, that the universe was not subsistent in the divine conceptions, yet it was the single sole object of the divine regard. And if we think less than this, with regard to God's thoughts concerning us, we think not only less than the truth, but less than all which is necessary to elevate us into anything like union and fellowship with the mind of God. For if we think of him as so absolutely infinite as that the eternity which is to come is now before him, and that the eternity which is past is present to him, as well as the immediate moment in which we speak or think—so that the vast whole of the universe engrosses his regard, and we exist only as a single drop in the illimitable ocean, and, if he has some thoughts concerning us, it is only a thought in which the whole universe is equally implicated, and

of which it equally partakes—if he feels a regard, it is bestowed on that whole being—if he exercises his care, it is for their general welfare—and if he looks forward to the issues which are to follow, they are issues which are to be wrought out by his equal operation; we lose all sense of individual obligation to him, and all immediate converse of the soul with him, as the Father of our spirits. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, that you will dismiss this mode of thinking, and continually accustom yourselves to a more human and humanizing mode of conceiving of Him, who has been pleased to descend from the glory of his own abstract excellence, in order to exhibit himself before you as divine, under all his attributes, with more than all the excellences which can dignify that character, the image which could only be represented to man under the aspect of humanity.

But now we must contemplate, that which we have called **THE MOST ENERGETIC VIEW** of this important passage; we must regard the words as having a more marked bearing on the anticipation of the Son of God, before the formation of the world, contemplating the delightful issues and consequences of his earthly history.

In the first place, let us observe, for a moment, *the proofs of this anticipation and delight.*

It will not be denied by any one, that every movement of the Divine Mind was infinitely known to him, even if he be regarded only as having a separate existence previous to his appearance in humanity: but if, on the contrary, we contemplate him as intimately partaking of the depth of that mind, even in its essences, and with the counsels of that Infinite Being—because, in one word, he was “very God of very God” for ever, light of light, uncreated and infinite—we shall at once perceive, that all which God intended, in regard to the history of the world, must have been present and developed before him; all must have been perceived by him; it must have been the subject of his pleasure; it must have corresponded to his will; it must have been, not merely apprehended in its excellency, but embraced by his choice; or else, since there is no division in the eternal counsels, it never could have come forth into existence: so that you will at once perceive, that whatever may be the present history of man, or whatever may be the history of the Blessed Redeemer, if he be the Eternal Son of God in this high sense, and if he do possess all the characters of his Father’s glory and dignity, and all the fulness of his Father’s wisdom, he must have foreseen, and regarded with delight, all which transpires in succession on this earth.

Now, amongst the greatest parts of this human scheme, (and the chief and the foremost unquestionably was, that which allies man to spirituality; it was the probation, the permitted fall of man, with all its consequences; it was, that he should be placed in a state of light and happiness; that he should be free to stand or fall; and that in that freedom should be the perfection of his nature; and that, in the exercise of that freedom, falling he should not fall for ever, but that, on the contrary, there should be a scheme of mediation devised; which scheme, as you will at once perceive, none but the great Redeemer could carry out into effect; whereby he should be rescued from the ruins of the fall, and be placed in higher glory in an eternity of bliss and enjoy greater bliss for ever,

—amongst these parts, I say, of this great human scheme, we must regard *the specific circumstances of each individual mind, amongst the multitudes of those who will swell the song of final redemption, as having been present to the anticipation of the great Redeemer*: so that when he came to rescue those souls from death, he did so, delighting in the expectation of the individual recompense which should accrue both to him and to them. Rejoicing in the contemplation of all which should accrue to them and to himself, as the result of his mediatorial undertaking, his wisdom must have approved of the propriety of the plan, which placed them at first in jeopardy, and yet made them more secure; his wisdom must have exulted in that glory, which should be their recompense and happiness for ever, when it should be reinstated after having been once forfeited, and when it should be inherited as the natural and peculiar impartation of Him who is infinite in power and mercy. This wisdom of the great Redeemer must have rejoiced in perceiving all the various circumstances connected with the training and the disciplining of each mind for eternity. He must have perceived a propriety, in their being placed in circumstances of danger, and being subjected to such varieties of operation, in order that, at last, they might come to the attainment of that peculiarity of state and character, which they are destined to possess. His wisdom must have exulted in perceiving how these peculiarities should be absolutely numberless in the case of each individual; how finally there should be an aspect of blessedness cast over the whole multitude of the redeemed in light; and that in the happiness in which they should be enshrined, and which they should reflect back again, there should be diversity of feature and peculiarity of character, corresponding to the diversity and peculiarity of their own present circumstances in the discipline of heaven. He must have perceived the vast necessity of bringing them into such a condition of correspondence at the last; so that, when they come to render back their homage to Him from whom all proceeded, and give up all into His hands by whom they were originated, they should present before him various and peculiar circumstances, as different as were the peculiarities of their own condition, and all the circumstances through which they passed.

Now, if this be the fact and the issue, as unquestionably it is, then the blessed Redeemer, anticipating these things, must have exulted and delighted in the anticipation of the glory which shall result.

Again, it must be recollected that, in spite of all the dangers, and toils, and sorrows, which it should be his to endure, he is represented *as having presented himself, as having sprung forth, with the most perfect acquiescence and delight, in the appointment of himself as Mediator*. We cannot but perceive in this, the proof of the very fact revealed to us in the text, of wisdom “delighting in the habitable parts of the earth:” for what was it induced him to say, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart”—except, my brethren, the fact that he perceived a wisdom and a glory, in all which stood connected with this great work, and with all its issues, no otherwise to be developed and enjoyed?

Again, we are to recollect, that a *long and solemn preparation of types and shadows, undoubtedly contemplated in heaven, was made to foreshadow the*

coming of the great Redeemer, till, in the fulness of time, he was born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. Now, if angels desired to look into this mystery, and if, as the various circumstances of mankind were passing before their view, the wings of the cherubim shadowed their vision from the light of heaven, that they might look on things below; with what greater interest must we contemplate the Redeemer to have regarded it by a prophetic glance, and to have exulted in it with a holy anticipation.

Let us recollect again, *that, in the various manifestations of Deity in the first dispensation, he is represented as having been personally present.* He was the Angel of the Covenant: he it was of whom it was said, "His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Who was it talked with Abraham? Who ratified the covenant with Isaac? Who renewed and confirmed it again with Jacob? Who with him wrestled? and who despoiled himself (so to speak) of his omnipotence, when, in the act of triumph, he submitted himself, apparently, to a defeat? Who was it represented himself in all the brightness of heavenly representation to patriarchs and prophets of other ages? We are continually taught that it was He, for the name that is borne is "The Lord." And, as we are assured it could not be the Eternal Father, then sitting on the throne of heaven, (that never could be; for it is indeed blasphemy ever for a moment to imagine that that throne should be vacant, and that there should not sit the visible presence of God,) it must be Him who is represented as having come in the fulness of time in flesh, and presented himself before us in all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. His Spirit it was that spoke by the prophets, that indited these Scriptures, that ordained and arranged that ritual: he explains the meaning of it by perpetually referring it to himself, concealing its mysteries from some, while to others it came forth in the most visible and glorious manifestation. And if he did this, do you not perceive that all this is but the exultation of his wisdom, foreseeing that which should be, and delighting in the prospect, and realizing it in its issues, and still continually exhibiting the truth and the energy of the sentiment of the text?

We add, that, *when he personally appeared, it was in the precise circumstances, in the precise time, and in the precise manner, thus foretold; and that, throughout the whole of his sojourn on earth, there seems to be still the continuation of the same anticipating process.* No sooner does he present himself amongst us than, in the character of a babe, he is set before us as growing "in wisdom and stature," in order that it may be perceived in what manner he became contemplative of the great things of God. We know no more respecting him for thirty years; excepting only in one single instance, in which he is represented as having gone at the age of twelve years, at the very dawn of youth, when his faculties might be expected to begin to expand and unfold themselves, into the temple of God—or, as he himself represented, into "his Father's house," there hearing and answering questions, and proposing them, in relation to the great matters of the law, and all matters relating to the divine economy. Then afterwards, as soon as he is introduced to us, although we are told he became subject to his parents for a season, he is represented as still looking forward to something which is yet to be done in connexion with these glorious events. No sooner do we find him coming from the immediate



designation to his office which was conferred upon him, than he is driven of the Spirit into the wilderness, to prepare him for other sufferings. No sooner does he appear amongst mankind than, as a consequence of this temptation, he is prepared for his ministry, and the attainment of its results. But he is careful not to anticipate them; he has his eye upon the design, but he allows not for a single moment that any part of the design should be precipitated. He will not suffer a single allusion to escape him which might, in the most remote degree, afford any information as to the end; but he preserves the greatest degree of secrecy and silence until that end arrives. He tells us that he has "a baptism to be baptized with," and that he travels on to its accomplishment. You perceive his mind is still fixed upon the future. You find that when Peter rebuked him and said, "This be far from thee, Lord," he was excited to a momentary anger, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." You find him prophesying in regard to those particular circumstances, in connexion with his own sufferings and death. He tells his disciples how he should be forsaken of his brethren; how he should be mocked and scourged, and by whom: he tells them the power that should be specifically arranged against him: he predicts the precise period he should die, and the time he should lie beneath the power of the grave; nay, the time when he should rise again. And it would appear to us that these predictions must have been more numerous than is recorded in the Sacred Volume, from the fact that we are told, there are many things which Jesus said, which, if they had been written, the whole world would not have contained the books; but that these are written as sufficient specimens of all, in order that we might know that Jesus is the Son of God. And we find angels able to recall such circumstances to the remembrance of his disciples when they themselves had forgotten them, saying, "Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

The consequence of all which seems to be this: that it presses upon us this conclusion—that feeling the joy that was set before him, and exulting in its glory, he was content to endure the cross and to despise the shame; and that thus his eye was ever fixed on that glory, and his feet ever strained to that mark, and his hand ever stretched forth to grasp that which is thus represented in this beautiful passage, and which was continually associated with the delights that were ever in his mind inseparable from the salvation of man.

But, in the next place we must observe THE REASON WHENCE ARISES ALL THIS DELIGHT.

You cannot wonder at the delight which was associated with him if you take into consideration *the relation which he sustains towards us*. He is not ashamed to call us brethren in this our lowly habitation. For a season we who shall dwell in heaven, have houses of clay, and are but of yesterday: and though our breath is in our nostrils, and we are pressing forwards amidst things which perish ever before the eye, and crumble beneath the hand, we are candidates for immortality, we are destined to an inheritance in the skies; there are prepared for us mansions and bodies eternal as his own. Can you wonder, when he had a relation, an intimate relation to us—that of our Brother, our

Surety, our Friend, our Advocate, our Mediator—that of the Captain of our salvation, in which at last he shall wrestle and conquer—can you wonder that he should love to revisit these abodes, and to look on these scenes where we should maintain and carry on a contest which is sure to issue in our triumph and future glory; with all the dark spirits of hell, and with all the hosts of the universe arrayed on either hand, still combatting with us, in the high places of the field, or else resisting as in our passage to glory? Wonder you not, brethren, that man should stand in immediate relation and contact with Christ, that he should attain to the fulness of his glory. Oh wonder ye not that he should have regarded man from the skies, with an interest and a delight which the choirs of angels could not impart in their sweetest songs, and with all the fragrant and perfume of heaven breathed in eternal incense before his throne.

Again, recollect *the offices so heavenly and so wonderful he was to fulfil*; and you will not be surprised that his wisdom should have exulted: those offices so calculated to develope his resources; those offices so beautifully manifesting the divine provision for man, so calculated to secure that end, so calculated to secure the effectuation of the divine purposes, and the development and revelation of the divine counsels; those glorious offices of which all things earthly are shadows. And when you behold either the prophet, or when you see the priest ministering before the altar, and sprinkling it with blood—or when you see the king arrayed with his diadem of might, you see but a shadow, but a faint, dim shadow of the glorious offices of his high mediation. Contemplating, therefore, that which should be, as well as that which he should accomplish intermediately between God and man, being God as well as man, uniting both in one body for ever, we cannot wonder that he should have looked forward to all these scenes and manifestations with an anticipating delight, wholly and peculiarly his own.

Contemplate again, *the sufferings he was to endure*. He was to descend from heaven; he was to become a man of sorrows; he was to make experiment of woe; he was to pass through all the scenes and circumstances which belong to his people here below, in order that he might drink deep into the trials and sympathies with their sufferings, fears, and infirmities, and their various exposures, as well as in all the joys which it should be his to impart to them for ever and ever. Now, when you contemplate that he was to travel solitary and forlorn—that here he was to weep, and to hunger, and to become faint, and to be filled with grief and woe—that here he was to see his friends forsake him, his foes pursue him—here he was to stand derided, mocked, and condemned, and be crucified at last—here he was to exhibit a spectacle to the universe, that he might exalt the contemplation of the universe to the apprehension of higher forms and greater measures of excellency, and glory, and triumph, for evermore; you cannot wonder that, even before the first blossom put itself forth in the garden of Eden, that even before the very first rock of this creation was laid as the foundation on which afterwards to erect the glorious and wonderful superstructure of all things below—looking on, and contemplating all this, you cannot wonder that Christ should have cherished the anticipation of all which should be thus wonderfully carried out in due season, in its proper time, until he should come to renovate, in greater light and greater beauty, ages without end.

Contemplate, again, *the regard which must exist between himself and his people*. Affection brought him down, and love bent his steps from heaven; and in the fulness of time he offered himself; he took upon him the robe of mortality; he laid aside his brightest glories; he emptied himself, as far as it was possible, and divested himself even of his greatest powers; he partook with us in our lowly condition; he laid down at last with us in our habitation of darkness, and rested his head with us on the pillow of the dust: and thus did he display his affectionate and tender regard on our behalf; and now in heaven his eye is bent upon us, his heart still throbs in unison with ours, and he desires each moment to make us happy and blessed for ever. And can you wonder, when we return to him the affections of our hearts, our admiration, and our homage, ready to bow down our spirit in the dust before him, ready to shed our blood in testimony of our fidelity to his cause—ready even, when we are called upon, to acknowledge ourselves but nothing, but wholly and infinitely indebted to the riches of his grace—can you wonder that he should have looked forward in the fulness of his affection, and made his wisdom continually to exult in all which should thus produce events so blessed and glorious; and consummate, in the tenderest emotions of the heart, all which belongs to the relations and endearments subsisting between himself and his redeemed people?

Recollect, my brethren, *the glory he was to acquire*. And in this one anticipation you have all which it is possible that we can imagine as having caused him thus to exult in the contemplation of the future circumstances and history of man. What is that glory? It is not for us, my brethren, ever to conceive; and, were it conceivable, it would be vain for us to attempt to describe or to speak of it: it is in vain to think respecting it; for our minds must be first brought to the maturity of celestial bliss, ere we can apprehend its very elements. We speak of cloudless light; but that is not uncreated: we speak of glorious and beautiful visions passing perpetually before the eye; but they are not such as, when passing into a new form of being, we may anticipate to behold. Now we speak precisely in relation only to the affections of our being, and the things around us; but the very first correct conception concerning this happy and celestial form of blessedness, is utterly unknown. We have not so much as trodden one footstep in the course of thought which would lead us to this conception; we have not so much as formed one suggestion with regard to this glory. But this at least we know: it is a glory worthy of the Saviour; it is a glory that is to be enjoyed in the Saviour's presence. This we know: it is a glory which is to accrue to the Saviour, and be reflected back perpetually to himself.

These things being known, we perceive at once a reason for which, even from eternity, he might bend his eyes to earth; and well might we believe that every scene and circumstance of his earthly history would be presented to his uncreated glory before the formation of all things. The streets of Jerusalem, the desert shores of Jordan, the borders of Gennesaret and Galilee—those various scenes in which he breathed forth his prayers, or wept his tears of anguish—those scenes in which he watched by night over his slumbering disciples, and still continually revealed the problem of their history, and rejoiced in the anticipation that when, for a little season they should have sorrow, their joy should be restored, the joy which none could take away—those scenes in which

he developed all the tenderness, and love, and affection, and sweetness of that Spirit which dwelt continually within him, in its special purity—its peculiarly gentle and sympathetic character, testifying that it was human, while in its power it manifested itself divine; all these we may well believe to have been present to his view before this world was made, not less than the solitary mount on which he died, and which was made the altar for the atonement of the sins of the world, the central object for the gaze of an admiring universe.

Let us now consider THE INSTRUCTION THAT IS THUS IMPARTED IN THESE GRACIOUS WORDS; that thus the Saviour was with God, and was God; that he was with him as one brought up with him, rejoicing perpetually before him, rejoicing in all his perfection, and character, and excellency, but especially “rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and having his delights with the sons of men.”

We are taught, in the first place, *what is the reverence and homage we should render to him*. We are taught likewise in what manner we may calculate on *the perpetuity of his regard*: it was from everlasting to everlasting, and is yet eternally to endure.

We are taught, again, *the confidence we may repose in him*. We may present to him our feeblest services, in the anticipation of a rich return. Let us not be afraid to render to him whatever forms of obedience and gratitude he, by his grace, shall enable us to present. Oh, let us still remember this as that which himself has calculated as his proper recompense, which he considers as his **glory**, which he will perfume with the incense of his own intercession. Let us place our heart in his hand; let him offer it upon the altar of heaven; and let us come, my brethren, with our poor and feeble services, our imperfect conceptions, and our continual infirmities, and place ourselves in his presence, and offer to him whatever we have to render. What is it? Gratitude and love. What is it? Humble hope and steadfast devotion. What is it? Constant dependance upon his grace, power, tenderness, and compassion. What is it, but a heart, my brethren, so feeble, so polluted, so imperfect, as that we ourselves shrink from contemplating its character; but one which He was content to purchase, even with his own heart's blood? Let us come, then, and offer our heart before him, and he shall render it acceptable; he shall render it more worthy the regard of the Eternal Mind, more consistent with his own character; more consistent with what God requires than thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil, or the cattle upon a thousand hills, or all the glories and resources of the creation, if that heart were wanting.

In the third place we learn *the security with which we may rely upon his foresight and protection*. If, from eternity his eye has been fixed upon us; if, though in the heaven of love and joy that eye has been constantly resting upon us, and upon our condition, and circumstances, in order that he may understand and penetrate every thing which befalls us, and belongs to our progress; then, surely, we may revive ourselves with the thought that he will comfort us in every sorrow, provide for us in every necessity, and, finally, bring us to the full perfection and fruition of every joy.

We learn *the nature of that felicity which awaits us as his followers*. It is the reward of his own sufferings; it is that which he himself would delight in;



it is that which he believes to be a return, as suitable, as proper for such sufferings, and as their true issue. It is that whereon he rested with complacency, as well as that which he anticipated with affection; it is that which, in the character of divine wisdom, he foresaw and rejoiced in, as the proper result of every thing he was to endure. Now, tell me, my brethren, what is the amount of that blessedness which must arise for ever from his own character, and is to be a sufficient reward for his unspeakable woes! What must be that bliss which he would confess to be equivalent with the cup of bitterness and death, which once trembled in his hands! What must be the brightness of that glory which he will acknowledge to be equivalent in glory with the crown of thorns he once wore, and with the disgrace and infamy which assailed him on every hand! Tell me, my brethren, what must be that power which shall transform us into the very likeness of our Creator's purity and joy—when we shall see him, and stand the living receptacles, vessels created expressly in order that they may receive and contain, through eternity, the overflowings of its fulness, in permeated and transcendent bliss, with God for ever more! Tell me what must be that bliss, if he will acknowledge it to be a just return for those agonies which he endured, and continued to feel with greater and more awful intenseness, when he said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." We need no other description, we need no other conception of the glories of heaven. We rejoice in the infinity of that delight, which by its comprehensiveness and its awful amplitude, stretching beyond all thought, defies all our attempts to comprehend it. We feel that it is enough to know that it shall be given by the same hands that were pierced for us, and felt by the same bosom that was lacerated by the spear for us, to be equivalent for every agony and every woe.

In the last place, if Jesus thus rejoiced in the mansions of heaven, on the throne of God, and in the days of eternity, surrounded by the choirs of light, and the armies of the blessed, to bend his eye to earth, *how ought we to rejoice, to lift up our eyes from these habitations of sorrow, this pilgrimage of woe, this vale of tears, these houses of clay, to the glory and blessedness of heaven.* If the Redeemer, anticipating and contemplating all this, and alone able to estimate the true character of all, would bend his gaze from on high, feeling the throb of ecstasy arise within his bosom as he sat on the throne of heaven, in anticipation of the woes he must endure for our sakes; then tell me with what species of anticipation should our hearts become familiar, and to what heights of glory and anticipated joy, certain hereafter and ere long to be our own, should we ourselves aspire, when we know that all which he can give, (and that, my brethren, how great and glorious!) all that he can give, and all we can enjoy, shall be our own throughout the ages of eternity; and when, as he exulted in the prospect of his earthly sorrows, he has set us an example of the way in which we, overleaping the bounds of time, and looking forward into the shadows of eternity, and grasping what is hid by the veil and the cloud, go in our delighted prospect onward, until, by realization and by faith, we come already to possess that which shall be ours for ever; when it is our own, to render it back to him, from whom for ever it will proceed in all its fulness, and in all its ecstasy, and in all the ravishment of its delights; and so, in uniting our emotions to his own, experience happiness denied to angels, unknown to seraphim, and which can only belong to the brotherhood of the Son of God

## THE ANALOGY BETWEEN CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

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"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid."—ROMANS, ii. 28, to iii. 4.

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My brethren, it has pleased God to teach us in the Bible, by the history of other people; not only by direct precept, which we may suppose addressed to ourselves, but indirectly, by the application to ourselves of the histories of others: histories ordered in all their circumstances, and related in all their details, for the express purpose of being so applied by us for our instruction. Israel was a type; and the things which were written concerning Israel, were written for our learning. This is expressly stated by St. Paul, when, having enumerated a list of the particulars of the history of Israel, he declares that all these things were examples, and were written for our admonition.

One of the things written concerning Israel, I now wish to draw your attention to: it is circumcision. This, amongst others, was intended for our instruction; and in attending to the Scriptural account of it, we shall read the very best, the most satisfactory, and comprehensive comment, on what is, and must be, interesting to every real Christian, and especially to every Christian parent—the ordinance of baptism.

The analogy between circumcision under the Jewish dispensation, and baptism under the Christian, is not a fanciful invention of human commentators, but is involved in the language of the inspired Apostle himself. Let me call your attention to the mode in which he addresses the Colossian Church in the second chapter of his Epistle to that Church, at the eleventh verse. Having told them that they were complete in Christ, he proceeds thus: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God which hath raised him from the dead. And ye being dead in your sins in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Observe here, their unconverted state of nature is called, "uncircumcision in the flesh;" and their renewed state in Christ is called "circumcision made without hands:" that is, spiritual circumcision.

And the same change in the same sentence is called being "buried" and "risen" again with Christ by baptism, "through the faith of the operation of God.' Now it is to be remembered here, that St. Paul was not writing to the Jews : so that there is no pretext for saying, that this language was merely an allusion to the ancient ceremonies : he was writing to Gentile converts : and if there be no analogy between circumcision and baptism, it must certainly be admitted that the language the Apostle here used was calculated to mislead, to embarrass, to puzzle those converts, rather than to enlighten and instruct them.

This analogy, however, between circumcision and baptism, has not ever been denied in the universal and catholic Church of Christ. There has been a small secession from that Church, denying this analogy ; but a secession almost (comparatively, as to numbers) insignificant ; although ranking among its members men of very high attainments. On the ground, then, of this analogy, I proceed to shew you the Scriptural instruction, which we derive upon the subject of baptism, from, first, the institution, then the history, of baptism ; and lastly, the abuse of circumcision amongst the Jews.

OF ITS INSTITUTION we read in Genesis, xvii. 9 : " God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee ; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin ; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." You observe, here is its institution. It is called, " the covenant," and " the token of the covenant," which God established with Abraham and his seed. The only observation to be made upon this, which is of importance, is this—that circumcision was not of man's invention, but of God's appointment. So far the analogy is complete. Baptism is not a ceremony introduced into the Church by the invention of man ; although the manner of administration, the particulars and details of its administration in the Church, not being specified in the Scriptures, being left open, were ordered by men in their wisdom for order and decency's sake. But the thing itself is to be distinguished from the particulars of its administration ; the ordinance itself is the appointment of God. I need but remind you of the commandment of Jesus to the disciples, " Go and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

We consider now THE HISTORY OF THE ORDINANCE OF CIRCUMCISION. And first, it is to be observed, that it commenced with adults, as you may read in Genesis, xvii. 23 : " Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house ; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the self same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with the money of the stranger, were circumcised with him." Thus the ordinance commenced upon adults. We do not read distinctly concerning the state of mind of all

these adults: we know not whether the whole household were of Abraham's own state of character. It is certain that, in one respect, Ishmael differed exceedingly from the promised son, Isaac, and from the character of his father. All I wish to observe is, that here is a company described as being circumcised, concerning whose individual character in the sight of God there is no distinct record in the Word of God.

Now here again the analogy is perfect. You will remember that baptism was first carried on amongst adults. It was instituted of God, as we have seen. The Apostles proceeded to baptize when they preached, but to baptize only adults, who professed their faith. You remember the instance of Lydia, the seller of purple at Thyatira. She having her heart opened to attend to the things that were spoken by Paul, was afterwards baptized, and her house; without any specific mention, as in the case of Abraham's house, of the peculiar and individual character of the parties composing her household: we simply read, that she was baptized, and her house. Another instance is recorded in the Acts, of the Ethiopian Eunuch, to whom Philip was desired to join himself, and go and preach the Gospel; on hearing which the Eunuch asked to be baptized, and Philip told him, if he believed he might: and he said, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God;" and upon his profession of that faith, Philip went down with him in the water and baptized him. And thus we perceive, that as in the case of circumcision, so in the case of baptism, it commenced with adults.

We have next to consider, that it continued not amongst adults, but on children. Refer to Genesis, xxi. 4: "Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him." And this became a custom in Israel. We do not read distinctly concerning the circumcision of Jacob or Esau; but it is clear they were circumcised the eighth day, according to the practice of their grandfather. So doubtless were Jacob's children, his sons and their sons: so that the whole nation became a circumcised nation, inclusive of characters of various descriptions. Koran, Dathan, and Abiram, were as truly circumcised in the flesh as Moses and Aaron: Jeroboam and Ahab were as truly circumcised as David or Hezekiah, as to the outward ordinance. And thus it came to pass, by the continuance of the outward ordinance, not waiting upon the individual character, but taking its rise on the eighth day of the child's age, in every instance of a Jewish family, there came to be two Israels, or Israel in two senses—Israel *spiritual*, inclusive of that chosen people that God reserved to himself, which should not bow the knee to the image of Baal, which should not follow a multitude to do evil, which should not go with an evil world, and live without God in the world; and Israel *national*, inclusive of the others, together with the mixed multitude which knew not God. And so the Apostle tells us in this Epistle, speaking on this very subject: "All are not Israel that are of Israel." So that the population of the earth might have been aptly described by three circles; one inclusive of all the heathen; another smaller one, including the baptized nation; and another smaller still, including the elect people of God.

Now observe, my brethren, the line of separation between the world and the baptized nation; between the open and visible line that God had appointed, that he might have a witness in the earth; that he might separate a people,



called by his name, and that the separation might be seen and known of all men. But the separation between them and the elect people of God, is not visible: the Lord's spiritual people was an unseen, and unknown, and hidden people: no man could designate them—distinctly put his finger on this and that man, and say they were the Lord's, while their neighbours were declared not to be the Lord's. He kept that in his own knowledge only. So that the line of separation between the baptized nation and the people of God is not the outward and visible ordinance, but something else, known unto God himself. "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" man knoweth not. So it was in Israel. We read of the prophet Elias, who at one time imagined the whole nation was gone from God, and that he himself alone was left: "They have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I only am left, and they seek my life." But he was wrong; God had at that time reserved to himself seven thousand men. It is of the greatest consequence to observe this, that while God determined to have a people that should be a witness for him in the earth—should be an outward standing memorial in the face of all men, that there is a Church of God—yet his own spiritual people are not so outwardly designated before mankind, but inwardly separated, and known unto God himself. Such was the state of the case in this typical nation. The whole people, beginning at eight days old—in process of time the whole people were circumcised; and that circumcised people contained within it a spiritual people, known unto God himself.

Now the analogy here again is perfect. Baptism, which commenced with adults, soon proceeded among the children; the children of the baptized converts were themselves baptized. There is no especial commandment for the purpose in the New Testament. No especial commandment was needed, because it was the practice of the earliest Christians, who themselves were Jews, to look upon their children as involved with themselves, and as included in the privileges that they were bound in. It would have been a strange thing to those Jews, if the Christian religion, placing before them greater privileges in every other respect, had restricted their privileges in this respect: if while it seemed to throw wide the arms of Jehovah's mercy around them, it at the same time had repelled their little ones from coming there. They were in the habit of bringing them as Jews; to do so as Christians, at the same age, was natural. But if the practice was to be changed, if instead of presenting their children according to their own faith, at eight days old, to be designated, they were not to present them, if they were to keep them back, if they were to withhold them till they had made a profession of faith, till they had formed some judgment of their characters, then, indeed, a special commandment would have been required, because they would have been called to change their already established practice. But, that they fell in from the Jewish practice to the Christian practice, adopting the ancient custom, is known to every careful reader of the early ecclesiastical history. And there is one fact I may just mention to you now, which proves it beyond a doubt, I think, to all unprejudiced men; it is this—that the first council of the Church which was convened after the days of the Apostles themselves, was called together at Carthage (a city in the north of Africa), and that the object of convening that council was to determine whether it were lawful at any time, or under any circum-

stances, to baptize a child before it was eight days old. It had not been lawful to circumcise a child before it was eight days old: for this there was an especial commandment. Some of the early Christians maintained, that, no matter what the circumstances of the case might be, no child should be baptized till it was eight days old; others thought they might be baptized at any age: and this council was convened for the purpose of settling this point. The decision of the council was, that as the Christian dispensation enlarged itself in mercy every way over the Jewish, so they decided, on the charitable side, that it was lawful to baptize a child at any period after its birth. I speak not of the wisdom of this decision; I merely speak of the fact of it, and that the object for which the council was convened proves beyond a doubt, that the practice in the church was, the baptism of infants.

The same consequences would naturally follow, which followed in the case of Israel. There would grow up a baptized community, a variety of characters; so that here, as before, there would be three circles—the whole people of the world as before, the baptized community, and the elect people within; and all would not be Christians which were of Christendom; as all were not Israelites, indeed, who were of Israel in the flesh. So it was, and so it is.

Now let us consider the NATURE OF THIS ORDINANCE, AND THE ABUSE OF IT. We read in Romans, iv. 11, that "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised." Here the faith is distinguished from circumcision. It was enjoyed by Abraham previous to the circumcision; and he received the circumcision—a sign, and declared also to be a seal, to him of the righteousness of the faith which he had before he received that seal.

Nothing less than this could ever have been supposed to belong to circumcision by any believing Israelite; every believer of that nation, looking only to the original institution of the ordinance, remembering it was a seal to his father Abraham of the righteousness of the faith which he had, would look upon it as a seal to himself in like manner, and would ask for it as a seal upon his child also, and would give thanks unto God for the opportunity afforded him of presenting his infant before the Lord to be sealed in like manner. He would presently find, indeed, that many have that outward seal who grow up without the faith of which it was intended to be the seal. But would their falling off alter, in his view, the situation of God? Would the circumstance, that many Israelites with the seal of circumcision upon them in the flesh, grew up uncircumcised in heart, change a believing Israelite's view of the ordinance as appointed of God? Would not this have been to allow the abuse of man to alter his view of the ordinance of God? And would not every believing Israelite, therefore, be called to this distinction—to mark the nature of the ordinance as appointed in the case of Abraham, and to distinguish between the ordinance itself and the abuse of it, into which the nation had fallen? Would it not be his privilege to rise, by faith, into that standing concern in the

ordinance in which Abraham stood, when it was a seal to him of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was yet uncircumcised. Would the circumstance of God's kindness to the nation, in commanding the ordinance to be prolonged amongst them, even amongst their children, before there was any faith, or possibility of expressing their faith; would this enlarged mercy on God's part operate to deter, or operate to cause to flag the faith of the believing Israelite? Ask yourselves, my brethren, how would a believer in Israel look upon circumcision? He would see around him many that were circumcised in the flesh, and yet were living strangers to the God of Israel. He would see that many of the priests, whose duty it was to perform that office, were themselves living strangers to the God of Israel. He would see that although the ordinance of the priesthood continued from Aaron downward, yet that the individual characters of the priests degenerated. Would he, therefore, argue that, because they were degenerated in character, the abuse of men had rendered null and void the ordinance of God, and that they ceased to have a priesthood at all? And would he conclude, because he saw circumcised persons living carelessly and in a worldly manner, that the abuse of man had rendered null and void the ordinance? Surely not: on the contrary, believing in his God, trusting in him, relying upon his faithful word, knowing that he was no respecter of persons, nor of times, nor of seasons, he would endeavour, amidst all the defection and the degeneracy of the people around him, to rise into holy confidence that God would bless his own ordinance, and to put his trust in him, to rest in it, to find it for himself, and to ask for it for his children—the seal of the righteousness of the faith which God had given him: and as he found that faith working within him, he would appeal to that ordinance as a proof of God's loving kindness to him.

Now here the analogy is the same. Baptism was, indeed, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which the first adult Christians had, being yet unbaptized. It does not follow that, even then, no persons were baptized except true believers. We know of one man who *was* baptized, and the Apostle immediately told him that he was “in the gall of bitterness,” that he had “neither part nor lot in the matter.” But all who made a profession of faith were baptized. If the answer were the answer of a good conscience, then baptism was all that it was intended to be—a seal to them of the righteousness of the faith which God had given them. But afterwards, when the infants of those believing parents were baptized, it would presently appear that many were baptized in the flesh who lived without God in the world: and the faith of the believer would then be put to a trial. If every baptized person walking with God had no trial of faith, the visible and the invisible church would be one and the same; there would be no longer any “hidden ones.” How is it possible to manage these two things—to have an outward company that shall be witnesses for the name of God, and yet not to have his own people known outwardly? The only way to manage it is (which God has done), to give a sign which should be carried far and wide to all people—which should indeed be, to every one that believeth, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, and yet should be abused by many who believe not. This is precisely the state of the case. Baptism has been abused, as circumcision was. The nature of it is of God's appointment, to be a seal to the heart, an assurance to the man, that God loves

him, an assurance to him of the blessing which he receives through the faith that God has given him; but it has been abused.

Now, let me call your attention to the way in which circumcision was abused. Oh, it is a most awful thing! It is the nature of the human heart to desire to escape punishment without desiring to avoid sin: and therefore the tendency of man always has been to substitute some form for *real* religion; because real religion purifies the heart, and sanctifies it. But man wants to be safe without being sanctified; the natural man wants to be safe without being holy; and, therefore, if he can persuade himself that some outward form, which does not touch the heart, will save him from punishment, those outward forms become his god, become his whole dependence. This is the genius of all formality in religion: this is the very root and core of the Romish Church; to make men so depend upon the outward forms, upon the doing certain things, upon the saying of certain prayers, upon attendances at certain offices—to make them so depend upon these for safety, that they are at ease in thinking they may do without holiness.

See, then, how the Jews fell into the abuse of circumcision, and all their other ordinances. They boasted themselves of being the children of Abraham; they placed their confidence in that for escape from punishment from the God of Abraham. There is nothing that the Scripture is more express against, nothing that the Holy Ghost, in the Word of God, has taken more specific pains to set before men with reiterated warnings, than this awful abuse that the Jews fell into, resting in outward privileges, as if *they* could give them safety with God. Remember what John the Baptist was commissioned to say to them. You find it in the third chapter of Matthew: “Bring forth fruits, meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” Now, says he, outward profession will not do; “the axe is laid to the root of the tree;” the heart-searching God is come; the kingdom of heaven is at hand; “therefore every tree that bringeth forth good fruit,” no matter what soil it may stand in, no matter in what privileged garden it may grow, though in the very heart of Israel—if it have not the very life of God in it, if it have not the fruitfulness of God in it, “it must be cast into the fire.”

Take another instance in the language of the Jews, as you read it in the eighth chapter of John. Jesus had told them that the truth would make them free; and they say (at the thirty-third verse,) “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;” (the *slave* of sin;) “and the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham’s seed;” (Abraham’s seed after the flesh;) “but ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and you do that which you have seen with your father. They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus answered and said unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children ye would do the works of Abraham: but now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.” He throws a doubt—“If ye were Abraham’s children, ye



would do the works of Abraham." He had already said, "I know ye are Abraham's seed." Now mark this language: they *were* Abraham's seed after the flesh, but they were not Abraham's children in character.

Consider, also, the language that Stephen addresses to them, as you read in Acts, vii. 51. Addressing an assembly of his countrymen, he says, ye stiff-necked and *uncircumcised in heart and ears.*" They were all circumcised in the flesh, but he says they were "uncircumcised in heart and ears:" and he charges them with resisting the Holy Ghost; as their fathers had done before, so did they.

There is a most remarkable passage in the second chapter to the Romans, where the Apostle declares to them that "he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh." It is not all that circumcision was intended to be: it is a token, but it is not the covenant; it is a part, but not the whole; and there is a difference between the whole and a part of any thing. He is, indeed, a Jew, in one sense, who was circumcised outwardly; he is one of that nation: yet the Apostle says, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly:" he is not a Jew in *all* the sense of that word: neither is that circumcision" (in all its meaning) "which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew"—a friend of God, a child of Abraham—"he is a Jew who is one inwardly," (in whom the Spirit of God resides,) "and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God;" which seeks not its reward before men; neither does its works to be seen of men, as the Pharisees did; but is content to be known and approved of God

Well, then, if that be the case, what is the advantage of circumcision? What advantage has the Jew more than all other people, if this be so? Oh, much every way: chiefly that because the oracles of God were given to them: the outward ordinances of all his worship; the mercy-seat, the temple with all its furniture; all the blessed things of the tabernacle shadowing forth the fulness of Jesus Christ; all these were given to the Jews. And what, though some of the people did not believe, "shall their unbelief make the faith of God" (that is the faithfulness of God in declaring, that his word should not go forth void—the faithfulness of God in having promised that he would bless his word; that it was the seed of life; that as the rain came down, and the snow, from heaven, and returned not to heaven, but watered the earth, so as to give seed to the sower and bread to the eater—so should his word be; it should accomplish the thing whereto he sent it:) shall the unbelief of some of God's people render God's faithfulness in promising a blessing on his word, null and void? God forbid! Shall the abuse of the ordinance render the ordinance useless? God forbid! Shall the people's abuse of their privileges make those things cease to be privileges? Oh, no: it should only exhibit their wickedness; their unrighteousness will only "commend," or exhibit "the righteousness of God;" God's truth will more abound through their lie unto God's own glory. This shall be the consequence.

Now, my dear brethren, how awful is the analogy here! Men are still essentially what men were; the heart is still "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." You have the very same root of bitterness in you which they had: you have the same tendency to substitute formal for vital religion, although,

indeed, in these latter days, there is a tendency another way, which is, to throw off both religion and form, and to occupy ourselves in the various intellectual adornments which Satan hath put forth to deceive the heart, and to cast the soul into hell. But still, with regard to the outward forms of religion, there remains a large class of persons amongst ourselves who place the same sort of bold reliance upon the outward ordinance of baptism, upon their connexion with the Established Church, that the Jews placed upon their being the children of Abraham. Oh, my friends, take heed of this leaven of ungodliness. Read with me, in its application to yourselves, a portion of this second chapter of the epistle to the Romans: most remarkable it is, by the transposition of a few words—changing “Jew” for “Christian” and changing “circumcision” for “baptism.” Begin now, and read at the seventeenth verse: “Behold thou art called a Christian, and retest in the Gospel, and makest thy boast of Christ, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Gospel; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes; which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the Gospel. Thou, therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should believe in Jesus, dost thou believe in Jesus? Thou that sayest, a man should be born again of God, art thou born again? Thou that sayest, a man should walk separate from sinners, art thou separate from sinners? Thou that in this boasted ordinance of baptism, sayest, that a man should renounce the vanities of this wicked world”—(the vanities of this wicked world—what are they? Those idle amusements—those expensive dresses—those luxurious entertainments)—thou that sayest a man should renounce those things, dost thou renounce them? Thou that abhorrest idolatry, art thou thyself an idolator? Where is your heart? On what is it fixed? What is the chief object of its delight? Oh, my friends, in the name of God I urge you to search yourselves. “Thou that makest thy boast of the Gospel, through disbelieving the Gospel dishonourest thou God?” “The Gospel:” my brethren, do you believe the Gospel? Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for you—that every one that believeth is accepted with him freely—that you stand before God as part and parcel of his Son—that you are as truly saved as Jesus is—as risen with him into heavenly places—glorified now in the everlasting purposes of your heavenly Father—one with him, united to him as a member to the body, breathing out of the very fulness that he does in the wisdom of God, the love that was in him being in you, the love wherewith the Father loved him being in you? Through disbelieving the Gospel under the plausible pretence of humility, and that assurance is presumption, you dishonour God’s word. “For the Gospel verily profiteth, if a man believeth: baptism profiteth, if a man be a believer; but if thou be an unbeliever, thy baptism is made no baptism. Therefore, if a man without baptism be a believer, shall not his no baptism be accounted for baptism? And shall not that unbaptized man, believing the Gospel, judge thee who, with the outward baptism, disbelieveth the Gospel? For he is not a Christian who is one outwardly; neither is that baptism in all its power, which is outward in the flesh;” (it is only the token—it is not the covenant :) “but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God,

What advantage, then, hath the Christian? or what profit is there in baptism? Oh, much every way, chiefly, because that unto us are committed the oracles of God;" unto us are committed the ordinances of divine worship; unto us are committed opportunities of assembling ourselves together for the preaching of the Gospel. "And what though some do not believe, shall their unbelief prevent these things from being blessed, or his word from being blessed? No, my brethren; let God be true, and let every man be a liar." *These are* blessings though they are abused: and through your abuse of them the blessing is exhibited, and God's kindness, in prolonging it to you. Oh, how mercy is exhibited—oh, how love is commended through the wickedness of this and other nominally Christian nations; that he has not been provoked to withdraw his blessing—that he has not been provoked to raise his hand and say, "As ye would not hear when I called, so now when you call I will not hear;" that he has not been led to treat us as he treated the ancient churches in Asia, whose candlestick was removed because that, while they had privileges, they abused them by unbelief.

Oh, my beloved brethren, pray that God would grant to us faith in the ordinances of his church; that some spring of regenerating power may rise amongst us, and that we may have confidence in the appointments of his will. How our reformers entered into this with reference to that ordinance we have administered. "Doubt you not," said they, "but earnestly believe." Then they prayed, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this child:" make baptism all that it was intended to be; make it the seal of the righteousness of faith—our faith in bringing the child, and the child's faith, when the Holy Ghost shall breathe on the child's soul, and the child shall look back to this hour and say, "There God sealed me, through the merciful and charitable instrumentality of his church: and now his Spirit teaches me to give thanks for the same." Believing this, we proceed to thank God for having done so. Oh, with what faltering hearts, unworthy as they are, cold and faithless as they are, with what faltering hearts are we often obliged to say, "We thank thee that thou hast regenerated this infant with thy Holy Spirit." My dear brethren, I know no greater triumph of faith, than to say these words with a safe conscience. It is not an unauthorized assertion, it is not a struggle to make good a service appointed by man, but it is to do honour to an ordinance appointed by God; it is, as far as lieth in us, to extend that invisible line which includes the elect people of God—to enlarge it, as near as may be, to the boundary of that outward and visible line which includes the whole baptized family; it is to enlarge the jewel which God has in his casket, to extend it as near the boundaries of the casket as may be. God has a baptized casket in which he keeps the elect jewel.

My dear friends, lay this subject carefully and seriously to heart. See how plainly the substance of it derives itself from the Word of God. I have already said that the particulars of the administration of it were ordained in the wisdom of man. For those particulars we have not the same authority; but we have this authority: those that were over us in the Lord have given certain commandments respecting witnesses to be taken in the case of adult baptism—witnesses taken in the eyes of the church that this baptism was truly done; and in the case of infant sponsors, as we call them, pledges, witnesses given in the sight of the church—pledged friends, Christian friends, pledged to have a

Christian, fatherly regard over that little member of Christ's church. These things were ordered of our forefathers for decency and order's sake in the church. Now, if this be not opposed to the word of God, then the circumstance of those in authority having commanded them, gives them weight on a Christian man's conscience, because the Bible says, "Obey them that have the rule over you." Those that have the rule over us commanded those particulars, and for conscience' sake, in obedience to that precept of the Apostle, we comply with what they have commanded, unless it can be shown there is something in it opposed to the word of God. If, then, this charitable work of Christian men and women coming forward to receive the children of professing Christian parents, were taken in this light, there might be yet in the good mercy of God, if not a regenerating power over the whole church, yet such a witness raised in Christian congregations as would exhibit what it ought to be, and make men ashamed of the contrast.

I pray God to render this instruction which I have offered you this morning, and which has indeed been pressed upon me by the circumstances of this baptism occurring so early in my ministration in this place—I pray God to bless it to your souls; to give you confidence in his ordinances, without that abuse, that fatal abuse, which would substitute the form for the inward power. Oh, be assured, that while circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith, the baptism which is of the heart is the purifying power of God. Oh, take the language of Paul to the Colossians, and ask yourselves if ye are circumcised with that circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh; or of the circumcision of Christ; being buried with him in baptism; buried with him from all interest in an evil world: I mean such interest as interferes with the devotedness of your hearts to God. There remain interests which you must attend to; but they are to be so inferior as to be aptly represented only by the things which a traveller engages in during his journey; the various duties or observations by the way-side, interesting at the time, and varying in interest, according to his powers of observation, and the effect of such observation on his feelings: but still the main business of his journey is going on; and however interesting these way-side points may be, he may not stop here; his home is not here: he is a pilgrim and a stranger; a pilgrim who pants to be with God, a stranger till he reaches his home where he dwells; buried from all abiding interest in this world, and risen with him into the conviction that the bosom of God is our home, through the faith of the operation of God, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. That this experience may be enlarged in others, that the power of the true baptism may come on you, that realizing the blessing of God in the ordinance, you may give him thanks that he sealed you in your infancy—may God in mercy grant this to you, for Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.



## RIGHT APPREHENSIONS OF THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

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GREAT GEORGE'S STREET CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 19, 1834.

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"But whom say ye that I am?"—MATTHEW, xvi. 15.

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THIS, my brethren, is a very close question upon a most important subject: and although it was originally addressed to the immediate disciples of our Lord, for the purpose of eliciting from them an expression of the opinion which they entertained concerning the character of their Master, yet it is as truly addressed to us, and to every one who comes under the sound of the Gospel, as it was to them. It is a question of infinite moment, of personal concern, of individual interest, to each and to every one of us; it is a question of so pressing a nature, that whether we are disposed to entertain it or not, it must be answered by us, now or at the judgment-day. We must either reply as Peter did, in adoration, homage, and love—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," or else, in that tremendous scene in which he shall appear, and sit upon the great white throne, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before him, we shall be compelled to cry out, with the despairing demon, "We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God—our tormentor and our judge." Oh, brethren, let us entertain the question, then, and give to it the more earnest heed: and let us imagine that we hear the voice of the Redeemer speaking to us, and saying, "Whom say ye that I am?"

Real religion—to which correct views, and suitable conduct, with regard to Christ are indispensably necessary—is a personal thing: it is each one's individual concern. Our Lord first asked the disciples what others said concerning him; what were the prevalent opinions respecting him; and, as far as they were acquainted with them, the disciples told him: "One says one thing, and another another." And then he brought the matter a little nearer home: "Whom say ye that I am? What think ye of Christ? What are *your* opinions concerning my character and my claims, my person, and my work, the truth and the design of my mission to this world? Whom say ye that I am? I am here amongst you as one that serveth: I assume no pomp, I make no parade: the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. Whom say ye then, that I the Son of Man am?" My brethren, it is not enough that others entertain and express opinions concerning Christ, and that we are made acquainted with their opinions, and are able to detail them, and explain them, and argue about them; but we must have opinions of our own. Whatsoever may be the case with respect to others,

it is of the utmost moment, that the opinions which we entertain concerning Christ should be correct; for if the opinions which we entertain concerning him are not correct, they will lead to practical errors; and practical errors concerning Jesus Christ, persisted in until death, will be finally, irreversibly, and eternally fatal. Oh, it is not without reason, then, that the Redeemer presses upon us the solemn question, and that we, in his name, urge it upon you again this evening—"What think ye of Christ? Whom say ye that he is?"

I seek no artificial arrangement of this discourse. I observe in the first place, and the observation was suggested by the Saviour's inquiry of the disciples, that **THERE ARE MANY OPINIONS ABOUT CHRIST.** There were in his day; there have been ever since; there are so still. No decrees of Councils, no authoritative edicts, no decrees or formularies in religion, no Act of Uniformity, have ever been able to secure perfect uniformity as regards the opinion of mankind, touching this great question—Who is Jesus Christ? There are many indeed—alas, how many!—who neither know, nor care anything at all about him. Put the question to them—"Who is Jesus Christ?" and they are confounded and astonished by its novelty. They know not what to answer; like Gallio, they care for none of these things. All their concern is, to buy, and sell, and get gain; to eat, and drink, and be merry; to take their ease, enjoy their pleasure, and gratify their lusts, and appetites, and passions. But whether Jesus Christ be the Son of God or not, be the Saviour of the world or not, be the Judge of quick and dead or not, they neither know nor care.

But amongst those who do give themselves some concern respecting this important question, the opinions that prevail are various. It was so in the days of our Redeemer's personal ministry. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" "Some say John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Herod said John; his conscience suggested this to him; when he heard of the fame of Christ, he thought of the murder of that holy man, and then said, "Doubtless it is John the Baptist risen from the dead." Some said Elias: for it was predicted that the Messiah should come in the form and power of Elias. Some said Jeremias: for Jeremias was a weeping prophet; and Christ was a man of sorrows. Some said one thing, and some another.

But we have more to do with the opinions that prevail in our own day; and it may not be uninteresting and unprofitable, to review some of the more prominent and prevalent of these opinions; and ascertain how far they agree with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, and how far our opinions correspond with these.

Whom say ye then that he is, *as it regards his person?* There are some who have had the hardihood to deny the actual existence of any such person as Jesus Christ: they affirm that he is altogether a fictitious and fabulous character; that the whole of the Gospel history is a fiction, a forgery, cunningly devised, and artfully executed, by man. But who were they by whom this forgery was so wonderfully achieved? Who were they that wrote the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of the various Apostles, and the Book of the Revelations; books differing so widely as to their style, clearly indicating different authors, and yet corresponding so exactly each with the

other? Who is it that wrote the volumes of the fathers, which may be considered as so many commentaries upon the life, character, and doctrines of Christ? Who is it that skilfully inserted all those passages throughout the writings of classic authors, which have an obvious reference to Christ, and Christians, and the Christian cause? Who did all this? When did they do it? Where did they do it? How did they do it? And by what marvellous means did they succeed in ultimately palming the imposition upon the credulity of mankind; and then founding and instituting a church, which has been continued down to us from the beginning, and through so many ages? I say this they have never told us; and this they never will. But until they do, we must retain our belief unshaken by all their sophistry and art; while we fix on them the charge of forgery and fiction, which they are anxious to fasten upon us.

There are others who admit that Jesus Christ did exist; but they say that he was an impostor. To those that are of this opinion, we would propose for consideration, the declaration of the Jewish Rabbi: "We know," said he, "that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles which thou doest, except God be with him." No man can work miracles, but by the mighty power of God. Jesus Christ did work miracles. Either then Jesus Christ was no impostor, or else God assisted him in the fraud; a suggestion, at the bare thought of which we shudder, so horrible is its blasphemy. But, perhaps, these men will deny that Jesus Christ did work miracles. They might as well deny that Cæsar conquered Britain, or that Titus Vespasian took Jerusalem, or any other fact of credible history; for the evidence in support of the one is precisely the same—as good, as conclusive as undoubted—as that which supports the other. In short, the infidel upon his own profession, upon his own principles, by his own shewing, who rejects the truth of the Gospel history, ought to reject the truth of all history, and all the events of time; whatever his own ears have not heard, or his own eyes have not beheld.

There are others who admit that such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was no impostor, but they say he was a man, a *mere* man, nothing but a man. They deny that he had any existence previous to his birth in Bethlehem; they deny, likewise, that there were any miraculous or marvellous circumstances connected with his birth. They admit, indeed, that, in some sort, he was divinely inspired and taught of God; and hence, that he was a teacher sent from God, to enlighten and instruct mankind. But even upon this point, there are diversities of sentiment. Some will maintain that there were scenes and instances in which he was fallible; whilst there are some in the present day, who have not hesitated to assert the monstrous doctrine, that he had a sinful nature, though they admit, that he himself did no sin.

Such are some of the low and degrading opinions which men entertain concerning Christ. Thus they sink Him, who was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, to the level of creatures, frail and fallible as we.

But there are others, who, while they deny the true and proper divinity of Christ, nevertheless exalt him to the highest rank amongst created and dependent intelligences; and are willing to ascribe to him all possible honours, excepting only, such as are divine. But, if Jesus Christ be God, what is the

rank which they assign to him, to that which he actually possesses? If Jesus Christ be God, what are the honours they are disposed to pay him compared to those honours to which he has an unquestionable right? After all, between the highest finite and infinite intelligence, there must be an infinite distance; and the glories which they ascribe to him, and the honours which they pay him, withholding from him those honours which are divine, are nothing, less than nothing, and vanity, in comparison with those of which they rob him, and which he has a right to.

"But whom say ye that I am?" said Christ to the disciples. Now let us attend to the answer of Peter, who, speaking in the name, and on the behalf of the rest, promptly replied—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Let us ascertain what is the amount of dignity and glory which Peter thus ascribes to his Master; for it met with his Master's approbation, and, therefore, it is worthy to be our pattern and our guide.

"Blessed art thou," said Christ, "blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter"—alluding to his name, which signifies a rock, or stone: "and upon this rock"—not upon Peter, but upon that great fact which Peter's testimony had embraced, namely, his own Messiahship, his own essential Godhead, and his mediatorial character—"and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell"—that is, the powers of darkness—"shall not prevail against it." What was Peter's answer? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "The Christ;" that is, the Messiah, the Anointed of God. "The Son of the living God," an expression which was equivalent to saying, "Thou art in thy person divine; thou art equal with the Father; thou art one with Jehovah." It is a title which involves true and proper divinity. That it did so in the apprehension of the Jews, that the Jews universally so understood it, is obvious from that passage in John, where the Jews took up stones to stone him; when he asked them for which of the works—good works—he had done amongst them, they were about to stone him, they answered him, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God." For he had said that God was his Father, as they understood him, making himself equal with God. And he is the Son of God, in a sense in which no other being is; above and beyond that of the highest seraph that burns beyond the eternal throne: for, to which of those morning stars of light did he say, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"

Whom say ye, then that he is? Are you now prepared to give the answer to the question? Are you prepared to admit with the Apostle, that he was "in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God?" Are you prepared to give him the titles enumerated by the prophet—"And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?" Are you prepared to render to him that homage which it is the Father's pleasure he should receive, not only from mortals here below, but from the cherubim and seraphim of glory, and all the radiant hosts of the disembodied spirits of the just made perfect in the blessed world? "For when he bringeth in his first-begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him:" and "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed



all judgment unto the Son," for this purpose, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Are you prepared then to fall down in homage, and to say with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God?" Then do you admit his true and proper divinity; then may you say, and glory in the assurance, "My Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name, he shall thoroughly plead my cause."

But, secondly, Whom say ye that he is? What are your opinions *concerning the nature of the work which he came to accomplish?* Some affirm that Jesus Christ came merely to found a new religion, and teach a purer morality, and illustrate that purer morality by his holy life; and finally seal his testimony by a martyr's death. But do such conflicting views of the nature of the work the Redeemer came to accomplish answer the idea naturally awakened in the mind by expressions and declarations such as these: "For the Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth—to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles." Now what do expressions such as these mean? Do they not mean that we were lost, and that he paid the price which infinite justice demanded for our redemption; that thus we are bought by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world?" Do they not mean, that we were guilty, and that he is our substitute, and in our room and our stead endured the penalty and punishment due to our transgressions; that thus "by his stripes we are healed," and that "the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him?" Do they not mean that we have broken the law of God, and that he has rendered to that law that perfect, that spiritual obedience which it requires, and which we could never render; and that by virtue of that obedience, embraced by us in the exercise of faith, we are justified in the sight of God; and that thus he is "the end of the law for righteousness;" that thus "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" that so we may not have on our own righteousness at the last day, but, "be found in him," having on the righteousness of God, which is "by the faith of Jesus Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith?" My brethren, if words mean any thing they surely mean this. Those conceptions of the Redeemer's work that fall below this level, fall below the reality, and far below the necessity of the case; for he came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

Thirdly, Whom say ye that he is? What think ye of *his religion, his requirements, and his claims?* There are some who regard religion as the dark and gloomy parent of sadness and melancholy; as fit only for the aged and dying; for the chambers of maniacs; the cells of lunatics: and not fit for the active, the busy, the young, and the vigorous. But what are conceptions like these? What!—the canker of calumny. What is there in religion to make a man melancholy? The religion of Jesus! Is it that *peace* which passeth understanding, which it pours like a river through the soul? Is it that *joy* unspeakable

and full of glory, with which it lights up the countenance in gladness? Is it that *hope for immortality* which it awakens, and bids to blossom in the human breast? Is it this? What is there in the religion of Jesus Christ to make you melancholy? Is it the scenes of Paradise; the enjoyment of communion and fellowship with God; the sure and certain prospect of a brighter and better world beyond the grave? Is it this? Is there any thing in communion with God to make men miserable? Is there any thing in his service oppressive? No; his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

But there are *sacrifices*—yes, there are sacrifices required of him who would be the disciple of Christ. But what are they? Why the patient must sacrifice his disease; and the slave must cast away his chains; and the prodigal must forsake his filth and his rags, and must change them for the best robe, the full board, and all the other endearments of his father's house, his kindred, and his home. Yes, there are sacrifices; but of such things, as, if retained, would only work your ruin. There is a right eye to be plucked out, and a right hand to be cut off: that is, the for ever abandoning the pursuits once dear and precious. And why is this? Is it not far better to cut them off and cast them from you, than that body and soul should be cast together into hell? Oh, there is nothing required to be sacrificed by the religion of Jesus, but that which would work your ruin: everything is substituted that can ensure your felicity. There is joy in sorrow; there is support in trial; there is security in danger; there is consolation in death: and beyond the grave there is a mansion prepared for them that love the Saviour, and a glorious resurrection at the last day. Then shall we behold his face in righteousness, and be satisfied, waking up in his likeness.

Brethren, we observe, in the second place, that IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE FORM CORRECT AND DECIDED OPINIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. "What think ye of Christ? Whom say ye that he is?"

Remember that *our opportunities of doing so are very great*. There is the Bible; read it. Seek information concerning the nature and character of Christ, his office and his work, not from the testimony of others, but from the testimony of God in his holy word. Bring the sentiments and opinions of others to this test, and form your judgment accordingly. With the Bible in your hands, and the ministry of reconciliation and peace established in the midst of you, and the experience and the testimony of multitudes all around you, with a thousand voices crying perpetually in your ears, "This is the way, walk ye in it," how will ye escape if you treat this subject with indifference, if you disregard altogether the solemn call of the Gospel, which demands your attention, and solicits your regard? "How shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" It is utterly impossible that you should escape. There will be no plea that you can urge; no apology you can make; no argument you can use: you must stand speechless and condemned when the neglected and insulted Saviour sits upon the dread tribunal, and you are summoned to his bar. Oh, then, to-day, while it is called to-day, ponder the things which belong to your everlasting peace, ere you be called for ever from your probation. The cup of life and salvation is handed round amongst you—how often has it been presented to you!—oh, dash it not away, I beseech you, from your lips. The rock is smitten, and the living waters are flowing: stoop down and drink, and live for

ever: for he that "drinketh of this water, it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Put not, then, from you this solemn, momentous, question. Seek not to bury in oblivion the rising suggestions of conscience at this solemn hour: say not "To-morrow, and to-morrow I will hear thee: at a more convenient season I will attend to thee." Never can you have a more convenient season than the present. You are now where the Son of Man has power to forgive sins; and the ear of the Eternal is opened; and the gates of the city of refuge are thrown wide to welcome you; and the Intercessor pleads for you; and the arms of the Redeemer are stretched out to you; and angels are waiting to exult over you, and bear the glad tidings to the realms of glory, that you have repented, and returned to God.

"Hasten O sinner to be wise;  
And stay not for the morrow's sun."

May God impress these things upon your hearts, for Christ's sake Amen.

## CHRISTIANITY ADAPTED TO THE CONVERTING INDIVIDUALS AND CIVILIZING NATIONS.

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REV. H. MELVILL, A.M.

CAMDEN CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, OCTOBER 26, 1834

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“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.”—2 CORINTHIANS, x. 4.

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You meet, frequently, in the writings of St. Paul, with military allusions; but you are not to consider them as introduced by the Apostle's preference of the figurative style. We doubt whether it be altogether just, to speak of these allusions as metaphorical: there would be no metaphor, if the discourse ran actually on the meeting of armies, and the stratagems of war: and if there be any thing in the workings of Christianity, in reference either to the world at large, or to its individual professors, which can be fairly described as laying siege or giving battle, then it is not so much from the nature of the style as the nature of the subject, that the Apostle has recourse to military allusions.

We regard this as the true account of the allusion to the arms and the exploits of a warrior. The Christian is not so much metaphorically as really a soldier, if by a soldier we understand one who is beleaguered by enemies, and making his way against an ever-powerful and vigilant opposition: and the transactions of which this earth is the scene, are more literally than figuratively military transactions, if there be carried on from the first, a conflict between evil and good on the stage of this lower creation.

It will, perhaps, make great difference, if we accustom ourselves to regard the allusions as metaphorical, when they should be regarded as literal. We are in the habit of supposing that great allowance is to be made for metaphor; so that in extracting the sentiment from the figure in which it is clothed, we are almost sure to reduce it, or to pare down its force. The proving a style figurative is very different from the proving a style exaggerated: and we may learn from a passage which occurs in the book of the prophecies of Ezekiel—“Then said I, Ah, Lord God, they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?”—that there is a strong disposition in the mind to evade the meaning of scriptural declarations, by regarding them as the figures of a high-wrought diction. It is a disposition which should be carefully observed and sedulously avoided; for, without questioning that there is a vast deal of metaphorical language in the Bible, we believe it not to be employed for the giving what may be called poetic effect, but to assist our conceptions of truths which, after all, are too gigantic for our grasp. There may be much of figure or hieroglyphic in the description of heaven and hell; the harps of the one, and the fires of the other, may,



perhaps, delineate by metaphor, the joy of the redeemed and the anguish of the lost: but of this we may be assured, that the figures are caused only by the poverty of language; it is not to exaggerate, but to show the terms of speech too weak for the subject, that recourse is had to metaphor and parable.

This remark applies, however, to what is confessedly metaphorical; whereas our business lies, at present, with what is apparently, but not really, metaphor. We say again, in reference to such language as the text, that we do not believe it so much the nature of the Apostle's style, as the nature of the Apostle's subject, which should be given in explanation of his military allusions. If he set himself to describe the present condition of the Christian, the work in which he is engaged, and the instruments with which he is to operate, it is not from a partiality to metaphor, that he takes you to the battle-field, and describes the work as conflict, and the instruments as arms: it is rather because conflict is literally the work of the Christian, and the instruments with which he plies the moral warfare correspond accurately with the arms with which a soldier is accoutred. If he would represent what goes on in the invisible world (relative, we mean, to this earth's population,) it is not as the ornaments of a florid diction, that he peoples what is unseen with jostling armies, and exhibits spiritual beings in the attitude, and with the tactics, of watchful antagonists: it is rather because, literally, there is a perpetual contest on the theatre of this creation, and good and evil angels wrestle for the mastery. And yet again, (and this is the case immediately suggested by our text,) if he would delineate the design and progress of Christianity, it is only because the opposition with which it meets, and the agency which it employs, are more literally described by military than by any other terms, that he exhibits creatures with weapons in their hands, and the sinfulness of a lost world as the strong holds which they are bidden to assault.

Now we have introduced our subject with these remarks, because we cannot but feel, as we have already observed, that men are apt to regard what sounds metaphorical, as though it were necessarily exaggerated. Let them determine an expression to be figurative, and they straightway contract the idea it embodies: whereas, we are certain, the more fitting way of dealing with such instances as that of our text is, to consider that there is no metaphor whatever; but that Christianity is actually a system to be advanced, under the valour and generalship of its professors, and the demolition of strong holds erected by Satan. And, desirous as we are this night, to stimulate you to increased energy in helping onward the march of Christianity, the professed object of this discourse being to engage your co-operation in the sending missions to the heathen, we have been anxious to remove, at the outset, misapprehension as to the real state of the case, and to fasten your thoughts on the literal character of the description which makes the preacher's business that of a warrior, and the subject matter of his assaults the strong fortresses of the enemy.

We may now proceed to examine more attentively the words of the text; the thing to be borne in mind, as we go on with our discourse, being, that these words are not to be interpreted as metaphorical, inasmuch as in the advancement of Christianity there is real battle, with its various issues of defeat and success.

Now, in other parts of his writings, and particularly in his Epistle to the

Ephesians, as you heard in the second lesson of the evening service, St. Paul represents every Christian as a soldier, and gives you at length the arms in which he is arrayed. Thus we are bidden to "put on the whole armour of God;" and mention is made of "the helmet of salvation," "the breastplate of righteousness," "the sword of the Spirit," and "the shield of faith." It were not difficult to corroborate all our foregoing remarks by showing you the thorough accuracy of this figurative language, (if such it must be called :) showing you, in other words, that faith, and righteousness, and salvation, are to the Christian exactly what the shield, and the breastplate, and the helmet, are to the soldier: and consequently, it is not so much in metaphor as in reality, that the followers of Christ may be regarded as warriors.

Now, the representation of our text is of a somewhat different order; and the weapons which are mentioned are not precisely those with which, as individuals, we must "fight the good fight of faith." You will perceive at once, by referring to the context, or, indeed, by observing the verse itself, that the Apostle is describing Christianity, not in its operation within the breast of an individual, but, rather, as the engine with which God was opposing, and would finally overthrow, the idolatry and wickedness of the world. We admit, indeed, that it is hardly, perhaps, necessary to separate altogether Christianity as ruling in the individual, from Christianity as advancing to sovereignty. The weapons with which the preacher conquers himself must, in the main, be those with which he conquers others. But still the points of view are manifestly different: so that if we would illustrate our text, it must not be by examining the weapons with which individually we are bidden to repel our spiritual opponents. St. Paul is describing himself as the champion of righteousness and truth, against the vices and errors of a profligate and ignorant world; and the point which he maintains is, that the engine with which he prosecutes his championship, though not "carnal," is "mighty through God" to the accomplishing the object proposed. Now we know that the engine with which the Apostle worked was simply the Gospel of Christ, preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: and hence we may give, as a sum of the declaration of the text, that Christianity, however at variance with systems of human wisdom and philosophy, is exactly adapted to overcome the dominion of Satan, and to make its way, through the blessing of God, to unlimited empire. "The weapons of our warfare"—that system of religion which we are commissioned to oppose to every system received amongst men—"are not carnal:" for neither in its nature nor in the mode of its publication does Christianity agree with human systems, or rest on human arts. But, nevertheless, these weapons are "mighty through God," inasmuch as Christianity—its proclamation being accompanied by the influences of the Divine Spirit—overthrows the strong holds of sin, and shall at last reduce the world into obedience to its Maker.

Such we think the drift of the statements under review—the fitness and power of the Gospel of Christ, considered as an engine devised and employed by God for the demolition of the empire of Satan. These form the theme on which the Apostle would fix our attention, and which appears most especially suited to a missionary sermon: and though it were impossible to bring within the limits of a discourse whatever tends to illustrate this theme, there are two general points of view, under which, if Christianity be thus viewed, we shall obtain

sufficient illustration of the truth to be maintained. We will regard Christianity, in the first place, as adapted to the converting individuals, and, in the second, as adapted to the civilizing nations: and we think that the result of the two-fold contemplation will be, the acknowledgment of the might of Christianity in casting down strong holds.

We begin with CHRISTIANITY AS ADAPTED TO THE CONVERTING INDIVIDUALS. And we fasten on the expression of the Apostle, that his weapons were not carnal: they were not such weapons as a carnal policy would have suggested, or a carnal philosophy approved. The doctrines advanced did not recommend themselves by their close appeal to reason; neither did they rely for their cogency on the eloquence with which they were urged. It seems implied that the virtue of the weapons lay in the fact of their not being carnal: for the Apostle is put on his defence, and the not using carnal weapons is his vindication. It is as though he had said that the carnal nature must be attacked by weapons of an opposite kind, and that no victory could be won so long as the nature and the weapons might be described in the same terms. And, beyond question, in this is the secret of the power of Christianity, and of the thorough insufficiency of every other system. Christianity attacks us with weapons which are not carnal, and then introduces what is directly antagonist to the nature to be mastered: whereas every other system, wielding no weapons but which are carnal, introduces nothing but what agrees with that nature. If Christianity demanded nothing more than confession of its truth, Christianity would be carnal, seeing that we satisfied ourselves of its evidence by a process of reasoning, and such process is quite at one with a carnal nature, flattering it by appealing to the native powers of man. If, again, Christianity depended for its reception on the eloquence of its teachers, so that it rested with them to urge and persuade men to believe, then again would Christianity be carnal, its whole effectiveness being drawn from the energy of the tongue and the susceptibility of the passions. And if Christianity were thus carnal—as every system must be which depends not on a higher than human agency—it could not be mighty in turning sinners to God: there would have been nothing in its constitution which at all clashed with a corrupt nature; for, though it might still have proposed a high standard of morality, and have summoned men to the performance of their duty, still, as appealing exclusively to their own reason and their own strength, it must have been congenial with those passions which opposed what it asked. No system of religion can be adapted to the conversion of fallen creatures which does not direct itself to the subduing their pride; and no system can direct itself to subduing that pride which addresses itself to their capacity to do right. But Christianity, as not being carnal, brings itself straightway into collision with every passion, and every principle, and every prejudice of the carnal nature, and must therefore either subdue, or be subdued by, that nature: it is not possible there should be peace between the two. So that the religion must be only nominally received (which is tantamount, as you know, to its being virtually rejected) or it must so prevail as to renovate its subjects and bring every thought into obedience. Hence it is that the Apostle lays stress upon the fact that his weapons were not carnal. The contrariety between the nature and the religion—the one being carnal, and the other not being carnal—this it was that

gave power to the engine, and rendered it mighty ; not, indeed, through his own energy, but “mighty through God” to the casting down of strong holds.

We do not think it possible to insist too strongly on the fact, that the great work of Christianity, considered as an engine for altering character, is derived from its basing itself on the supposition of human insufficiency. If it did not set itself to declaring man helpless, it would necessarily, we believe, leave man hopeless. It goes at once to the root of the disease, by proclaiming the man lost if left to himself. If it in any degree qualified this proclamation—if it addressed men as naturally able to effect anything towards their deliverance from the final consequences of evil—then in that same degree would it be carnal, and therefore aggravate what it undertook to remedy. But in requiring that its subjects should depend from the very beginning on divine assistance, it grapples at once with that self-confidence which, whilst the most inveterate, is also the most injurious, of those feelings which withstand the recovery of all moral excellence. It will not allow man to take credit to himself for a single step in the course of improvement : and this it is which makes it mighty, inas-much as being proud of the advance would ensure the falling back.

Now, there is a distinguishing characteristic by which Christianity is separated from every other system which proposes the reformation of men, and which could belong to no system which did not emanate from God. We hold it to have been far beyond carnal wisdom to have devised a system assuming, as its first principle, that man is without power. It is insupposable that carnal wisdom could suggest an arrangement whose every part should take for granted that its wisdom is folly ; but such is the peculiarity of Christianity ; and this peculiarity both proclaims it divine and makes it efficacious. We now feel that in sending a missionary, charged with nothing but the simple Gospel of Christ, to the tribes of the heathen, or to some neglected families of our own peasantry, we send him with an engine precisely adapted to the effecting a moral renovation. The sum and the substance of the announcement which he goes commissioned to make is, that “the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Into this simple declaration the epitome of the Bible is gathered—the nothingness of man, and the sufficiency of Christ : and if anything can demolish strong holds, it will be this declaration carried home to the heart by the Spirit of God. Let this declaration be received as truth, acted upon as truth, and man must be humbled before God under a sense of his own unworthiness, and, at the same time, confident in God as having reconciled him to himself by the death of his Son. Hence the strong hold of *pride* gives way ; for there must be humility where there is this feeling of helplessness : and with the strong hold of pride is overturned also the strong hold of *fear*, seeing that the lesson which teaches us our ruin teaches us, with equal emphasis, our restoration. And the strong hold of *indifference* has to be cast down : the message is a stirring one ; it will not let man rest till he flee impending wrath. Neither can the strong hold of *evil passions* remain unattacked : for the Gospel scheme in proffering forgiveness exacts the mortification of lusts. And hence it is the very nature of Christianity, that it is at once intended and adapted to undermine, and weaken, and finally overturn these fortresses which have been erected in the soul, and which are, literally, fresh-walled and fresh-garrisoned by the operation of any system which may be designated “carnal.”



We take, then, the untutored savage who has been nursed in idolatry, or the neglected peasant who has been abandoned to ignorance: we bring such an individual within the range of a foreign or home mission: and just on the principle that there are brought to bear upon him weapons that are not carnal, and in the proportion that there is no attempt to combine with these others of a more earthly temper, have we hope of seeing him emerge from his moral degradation an altered and an elevated being, gloriously emancipated from the tyranny of evil. We would have him attacked with nothing but the declaration that he has destroyed himself, but that in Christ is his help. We would not have this declaration prefaced by laborious disquisitions on the vanity of idols, or philosophical descriptions of the nature of Godhead. It is quite true that there are strong holds which meet the missionary on his first setting foot among the savages, and the demolition of which seems to be necessarily preliminary to the introduction of the Gospel. He must have an audience who believe in the being of a God, and in their own immortality, ere it would appear of any use to expatiate on the mercies of redemption: and until those to whom he speaks are assured that the stock and the stone before which they do homage have in them nothing of divinity, what likelihood can there be of their hearkening to communications which assume the falsehood of all which they have believed? Nevertheless, let the immediate theme of the missionary be Christ crucified, and he will find his weapons mighty to the casting down these strong holds. If we could give no reason for this, there would be no ground for surprise, inasmuch as we refer the effectiveness of the preaching exclusively to God, and it is sufficient explanation to us that he willed the success.

But it is not, under other points of view, an unaccountable thing, that the simple proclamation of the Gospel should demolish those fortresses which, on all carnal calculation, should be removed, ere the proclamation of the Gospel begins. The preaching of the cross is the finest preaching in the world that there is a God, and that the soul shall never die. It includes all that is fundamental in natural religion, whilst it gives in addition the sublimity of revealed. It requires, indeed, that there be a conscience to work upon, but it requires nothing else. It is not a solitary and barren truth that God has so loved us, as to give his Son to die for us. I cannot admit this truth without also admitting my own deathlessness and the awfulness of Deity. In announcing this truth, the preacher announces to me, that I am reserved for another stage of being, seeing that it must have been with the design of administering to my happiness throughout an unbounded duration, that so stupendous a sacrifice was offered in my behalf. And, he yet further announces to me, that I am living under the government of a righteous and omnipotent Spirit, at whose disposal lies my everlasting portion, and who, though justly provoked at the wickedness of my life, is of so yearning a tenderness, that he has opened a way by which I may be pardoned. There is all this, and more than this, in the simple preaching of the cross; and we know not why, if such be the preaching, it should not be made mighty to casting down the strong holds of unbelief.

The missionary has to deal with the degradation of superstition, and to convince the savages amongst whom he is thrown, that their idolatrous rites must be forsaken as impious, and destroyed. And, perhaps, you would have him, as preliminary to the publication of the Gospel, argue and expostulate on the

vanity of idols; and thus endeavour, by laboured demonstration of the spirituality and singleness of Deity, to sweep a clear scene for the announcements of Christianity. We are quite at issue with you on this; we would have him *begin* with the announcements of Christianity. What are these announcements, but that the invisible God, having revealed himself in the person of his Son, and provided for the rescue of a lost world, has commanded all men everywhere to turn from their vanities, and approach him through the Mediator? For our own part, we cannot see that such announcements stand in need of preface; they go straight to the extirpation of idolatry. All that is needed is evidence that the missionary speaks the truth; and this does not lie in any preliminary disquisition on the nature of Godhead. If it be allowed that the missionary has authority for what he utters, the strong hold of idolatry must give way; it is opposed by his statements; and there is no alternative, but that his statements be rejected as false, or the strong hold abandoned as untenable. And, therefore, if there be any preliminary process which is indispensable, ere the Gospel can be published, it would be that of the demonstration of the evidences of Christianity. For the messages of Christianity attack every fortress of superstition and vice; so that nothing is needed but the giving these messages the authority they claim as divine. Shall we then admit, that there is no room for the proclamations of the Gospel, until the missionary has worked out an elaborate proof of the origin of our religion, and when he has landed on the distant shore, and the wild heathen are clustered around him, must he be silent on the touching proffers of pardon to the lost, until he has drilled his audience into acquaintance with the external evidences of Christianity? Before we send a ship freighted with Bibles to some barbarous tribe, must we send a ship freighted with the writings of such men as Paley and Butler? And is there so little of self-evidencing power in the Word of the living God, that unless preceded by the credentials accumulated for centuries, there is no ground for hope that it will work conviction of its truth? This were representing Christianity as not fitted for universal diffusion, because requiring the preliminary of scholarship in every nation which it attempted to proselyte. And we hold it a glorious and incontrovertible truth, that the Gospel carries with it its own evidence; and that however massive and impregnable its external proof, yet, if this proof were swept away or altogether forgotten, the Bible might demonstrate, from its own pages, the divinity of its origin—the simple fact (and one which cannot be too often urged on your attention) that there is such a correspondence between the Bible and the conscience, as proclaims that **He** who implanted conscience must have indited the Bible. The two revelations—the revelation which God has made of himself by that mighty monitor which legislates in every man's breast, and the revelation which is contained in the inspired writings—these tally so nicely in the minutest particulars, that to admit one is to admit both divine. And therefore, though the preacher must be equipped with external evidences, so as to be able to defend, whenever needful, the outworks of Christianity, yet is he not required to keep back the doctrines, until he has substantiated the proofs of our religion. We say of the strong hold of infidelity, as well as every other, that it may be assaulted and demolished, though the alone engine employed be the proclamation of the Gospel. The savage may turn round upon the missionary, and ask him for

evidence that what he preaches is truth: and there are two ways in which the missionary may proceed to give the evidence. He may ply the savage with the testimony of antiquity and history, from miracles which have been wrought, and prophecies accomplished: this is one way; and we have our fears that the undisciplined mind on which he has to work will be almost inaccessible to this kind of demonstration. But there is another way, and we should like to see it fairly tried. The missionary, in place of deducing external proof, may trust to the self-evidencing power of Christianity. He may give his answer, by stating, more explicitly and more earnestly, the doctrines of the Gospel. He may appeal to the conscience of the savage, whether these doctrines do not commend themselves to his belief, in the intimate acquaintance which they manifest with his heart; their adaptation to his necessities; their close correspondence with suggestions which have been breathed into his soul by an unseen, but super-human counsellor. This is a kind of demonstration for which the undisciplined mind may stand prepared; and we have a thorough persuasion, not indeed that conviction will be necessarily produced, but that greater advancement will be made towards it, than by any process of what is commonly called argument. For we believe, that in plying the savage with a message which accuses him of manifold iniquities, and tells him of his inveterate depravity, and assumes to search into the hidden chambers of his heart, and bring out all the abominations secreted in those solitudes, we are just acting on him with an engine which must produce the impression, that He who framed the message had a power more than human, of inspecting the heart, and that thus within himself probing him to the quick, and thus evidencing a discernment nothing short of divine, the message proceeds to offer a remedy every way commensurate with the disease that is experienced. There must be a likelihood, not to be reached by any other process, that the savage will hail, with gladness and reverence, the announcements of redemption; and that thus when the fortress to be attacked is infidelity, the Gospel, preached in its simplicity, will be mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

And thus you see we are not afraid to plead for the accuracy of our text, when the strong holds in question are even those whose removal are thought necessary as a preliminary to the publication of Christianity. There is a power in the Bible to convince the understanding, as well as to convert the heart; and we are quite sure, that if we could transplant you to one of those missionary settlements, which rise in the dreariness of the vast heathen waste, the village church and the village school breaking refreshingly on the eye, wearied with the spectacle of ignorance and superstition; and if we could bring you into discourse with the self-denying preacher, who has given himself to the giant work of grappling with idolatry; we are quite sure you would receive from the missionary the strongest attestations of this power of Christianity, thrown from the first on its own resources for overcoming opposition. We can imagine him taking you to the hut of one of his converts, an old man, who broke boldly away from the trammels of falsehood; and who, undismayed by the taunts of his countrymen, and unseduced by their example, has honoured through many years the profession by the practice of Christianity. And you shall ask the missionary how he dealt from the first with this man. Did he begin with the evidences of religion? Oh, no: the doctrines were their own evidence. He proclaimed to the idolater

salvation through Christ : and the truth commended itself to the conscience, and asked no external demonstration. And did he call in none of the aids of philosophy to strengthen his convert in the rejection, by shewing him the vanity of paganism? Oh, no : the man's gaze was on the cross ; and where could he then gather greater evidence against the idols of his land? And did he not fortify this proselyte in his righteous resolution by the motives which moralists would use, and bring the maxims of the schools to brace him to constancy? Oh, no : the man had been taught as the truth is in Jesus ; could he need stronger argument against sin, or more stirring excitement to the culture of holiness? And if you should express surprise that the simple gospel of Christ had been the alone instrument in so great and enduring a transformation—that one garrison after another should have yielded to the summons—so that infidelity and idolatry, and licentiousness, the lusts of the mind, and the lusts of the flesh, have been successively mastered ; we know of no answer but this which the missionary would make—and in making this a smile of holy joy would light up his features—“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.”

Now up to this point we have strictly confined ourselves to that illustration of our text, which is gathered from the power of Christianity in converting individuals ; but we shall greatly corroborate our argument, if we examine, in the second place, as proposed, **THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY IN CIVILIZING NATIONS.**

It admits of little question, that paganism and barbarism go generally together ; so that the worshippers of idols are ordinarily deficient in the humanities of life. We may not indeed affirm that heathenism and civilization cannot co-exist ; for undoubtedly some of the nations of antiquity, as they could be surpassed by no modern nation in superstition, so by few, if any, in the arts and in literature. And we shall not pretend to say, that a vast revolution might not be wrought amongst a heathen population, if you domesticated in their land the husbandman and the artificer ; and thus awakened in them a taste for the comforts of civilized life ; even though you left them undisturbed in their idolatry, and sent them no missionary to publish Christianity. We suppose it quite possible, that the most degraded of our race might be disciplined into comparative civilization, by introducing amongst them the professions and the employments of handicraft and agriculture ; and above all, by imposing on them a code of sound laws, and by instituting authorities to carry them into effect, though religion were no further interfered with than to check such observances as might be opposed to public safety and decorum. So that we are not able to allege that Christianity is the alone engine of civilization ; but we do venture to affirm that none can be compared with it as to might and effectiveness. You may introduce the plough and the loom, but these act not on the passions which keep society unsettled and distracted : whereas exactly in the degree that you introduce Christianity you act on these passions, and thus remove the greatest barriers to public and domestic improvement. You may introduce laws, but laws can only touch the workings, not the principles of evil : whereas every step made by Christianity is a step against the principles, and therefore an advance to the placing government on its alone secure basis. We think that to all who are



acquainted with what Christianity is, it must be evident that a community of real Christians would be a condition of peaceful and well-conditioned families, and that to extirpate Christianity, though you left whatever else seemed to minister to security and happiness, would be to take from these families the main element of their comfort and dignity; and of course, therefore, it must also be evident that nothing can compensate a community for the want of Christianity; but that, whatever the degree up to which civilization may be carried without disturbing heathenism, it will be at last but a hollow and superficial thing, offering no pledge for the fixedness and harmony of the state. You might wear down a little of the ruggedness of savage life by introducing arts and laws; but no man can be far above the brute who does not know himself immortal, and any theory subordinate which is unacquainted with the retribution of a future state of being. And forasmuch as it is emphatically Christ which hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, we may venture to affirm that none but those who receive the gospel know rightly their own immortality, or can be governed by the sanctions of an everlasting recompense. So that the civilization which is detached from Christianity can be little better than an external polish. There has been no breaking the main springs of disorder and degradation; consequently the people being the same as ever at heart, need nothing but the withdrawal of the civilizing influence, and they easily relapse into original barbarism. Is it too much to say that he who degrades God must himself be degraded? He may have the art by which to chisel the marble almost into life; but I dare scarcely call him civilized if, when the statue is completed, he can worship it as divine. Is it civilization, or is man worthy the name of man, if there be mighty progress in science, but such debasement in religion as that, with the Egyptians, the beast is venerated and the vegetable deified? To civilize must be to raise man to his true place in the scale of creation; and who will affirm this done whilst he bows down to inferior creatures as his God?

It might not then be an untenable supposition, that nothing worthy the name of civilization can subsist with idolatry, so that Christianity is the alone effective engine for pulling down the strong holds of barbarism. But we are aware that this would be viewing civilization under an unusual aspect, and we shall not, therefore, press such an illustration of our text. The truth, however, which we have already advanced, and on which we may legitimately insist, suffices for all the purposes of our argument. You look on a heathen territory, and you are affected by the spectacle of the degraded and suffering state of its inhabitants: if you have not that enlarged philanthropy which will make you solicitous for the salvation of their souls, you may, nevertheless, regret that such crowds of your fellow men should be so little removed from the level of the brute, and you may desire to heighten and humanize their condition. You ask, then, for the machinery of civilization; and we hesitate not to point out to you the preached Gospel of Christ. We have a confidence in the missionary which we should not have in any lecturer on political economy, or any instructor in handicraft or husbandry. You may not, indeed, trace any connexion between the religion he promulgates, and the arts which you wish to introduce. You may think it a strange mode of teaching the savage the use of the plough to teach him the doctrine of the atonement. But, the connexion lies in this—and we hold it to be strong and well defined—by instructing the

savage in the truths of Christianity, I set before him motives, such as cannot elsewhere be found, to the living soberly, industriously, and honestly: I furnish him at once with inducements, whose strength it is impossible to resist, to the practising the duties, and evading the vices, which respectively uphold and obstruct the well-being of society. And, if this be done, has not more been done towards elevating him to his right place in the human family, than if the missionary taught him an improved mode of agriculture? Shall not the mental process be deemed far superior to the mechanical? And shall it be denied that the savage, who has learned industry in learning morality, has gone onward with an ampler stride in the march of civilization, than another who has consented to handle the plough, because perceiving he would increase his animal comforts? We are far from asking that the missionary should hold himself aloof from all but religious instruction: on the contrary, we think, that having been instrumental in implanting the disposition to industry, he should be also instrumental in giving it direction; and we should regard him as most righteously employed, if we saw him instructing the converts whom he had won over from idols, in all those modes of husbandry and multiplied resources which give comfort and security to the dwellers in his own native land.

In this we believe to be the secret of the surpassing success of those devoted men, the Moravians. It is not, as many suppose, that the Moravians first civilized and then christianized. They tried this mode at their first outset in the missionary career, and met with signal failure. It is true that they took christianization as the basis of civilization. They domesticated themselves among the heathen, and as men joined their little colony, with a long dormant immortality awakened and stirred, they showed them how the striving for heaven stands associated with the performance of every relative duty, and binds them down as candidates for salvation through Christ, to the industrious maintenance of their families, and a righteous regard to the welfare of their fellows. It is this which we consider as the due order; not to attempt to civilize first, as though men in their savage state were not ready for Christianity; but, to begin at once with the attempt to christianize, computing that the very essence of the barbarism is the heathenism, and that in the train of the religion of Jesus move the arts which adorn, and the charities which soften, human life. And, in this is Christianity mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. The missionary, with no carnal weapons at his disposal, with no engine but that Gospel which the worldly-minded account foolishness, has a far higher likelihood of improving the institutions of a barbarous tribe, introducing amongst them the dignities and refinements of polished society, increasing the comforts of domestic life, and establishing civil governments on legitimate principles, than if he were the delegate of philosophers, who have made civilization their study, or of kings who would bestow all their power on its promotion.

And we could again wish you, for the sake of attesting this part of our argument, transported to some missionary settlement in the midst of a yet uncivilized nation. We should like to travel with you through a district, still subjected to the tyranny of heathenism, until you reach the missionary village, rising in its peacefulness on the mountain side, or in the shaded valley. What a contrast between the scenes through which you have passed, and that you now attain! How striking the difference between the rude wanderers whom you

had met in fear and suspicion, and the cottagers who flock around you and hail you as a brother! Are they men of the same tribe—those whom we have seen marauding like beasts of prey, and those who are here settled to quiet occupation? In place of the war-whoop, whose wild echoes startled us as we wound through the passes of the land, we hear nothing but the music of contentment, the hum of children busy in their schools, or the church-bell chiming its summons to worship. What hath effected this wondrous transformation? What magician hath been here, summoning up a little paradise in the desert, and reducing into industrious, and contented households, the very outcasts of human kind. We will ask the missionary who is moving, as the patriarch of the village, from cottage to cottage, encouraging and instructing the several families who receive him with smiles, and hear him with reverence. We will ask him, by what influence he withdrew them from lawlessness, and formed them into a happy and well-disciplined community. Did he begin with essays on the constitution of society; on the undeveloped powers of the country; on the advantages derivable from the division of labour; or on those modes of civilization which would be thought worthy of patronage by a philosophical board? O, the missionary will not tell you of such modes of assaulting the degradation of centuries: he will tell you that he departed from his distant home, charged with the Gospel of Christ: he will tell you that he preached Jesus to savages, and that he found, as the heart melted at the tidings of redemption, the manners softened, and the customs were reformed: he will tell you that he did nothing but plant the cross in the waste, and that he had found, that beneath its shadow all that is ferocious would wither, and all that is gentle spring up and ripen. If you express surprise at his reply, and marvel that the proclamation of Christianity should have caused the spear to be beaten into the pruning-hook, and clothed the mountain side with smiling cottages, and brought out and directed the energies of industry, and introduced the comforts and refinements of civilized life; we know of nothing which the missionary would say, but this: "There was indeed a strong hold to be overthrown—the strong hold of inveterate barbarism; but the weapons of our warfare, though not carnal, are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

Such, brethren, beloved in the Lord, such is Christianity, mighty in the converting individuals, mighty in the civilizing nations. This is the religion through which, as a people, we ourselves have risen to greatness, and from which each of us draws the means of grace and the hope of glory. This is the religion, thus effective in civilizing the waste places of the earth, and elevating the most degraded of our race, in the diffusion of which we now ask you to show interest. We call upon you to aid in sending forth more warriors, with those weapons in their hands which we have thus proved mighty to the effecting results which you desire as Christians and as men: "Freely have ye received, freely give."

The duty of assisting Christian missions is not a duty to be measured by their success. Indeed there is every thing to encourage; since Christianity, as we have seen, is exactly adapted to the work it would achieve; and its prophecies assert its universal diffusion. But nevertheless it is not by the *success* that we determine the *duty* of missions. The obligation to send missionaries rests on

the same footing as the obligation to receive the holy communion—a command in both cases. “Do this in remembrance of me,” is my reason for the one: “Go ye and preach the Gospel to every creature,” is my reason as to the other. But while the existence of a direct command ought to leave no room for doubt, we may lawfully animate ourselves to obedience by such views as we have now made of the might of Christianity. We are not engaged in a work which gives sphere of exercise to nothing but faith: hope follows the missionary as he crosses oceans, and penetrates the fastnesses of far-off lands. I know the power he bears with him to bless; I know he goes to utter the word of which God has declared, that it shall not return to him void. I know if it is not yet the time for the general gathering of the nations, and if that general gathering be not to be expected until Christ re-appear, there is a remnant from the mountains of heathenism whom the missionary may be instrumental in bringing home to the fold. I know it to be the purpose of the Almighty that the Gospel shall be preached as a witness to all nations, and that “then shall the end come.” And therefore does “the end” (the season on which the Church has fastened her longings) appear to approach, as new efforts are made to diffuse Christianity.

Shall it then be said there is deficiency of motive over and above the simple command to the liberally supporting the cause of missions? We can never believe that God enjoins what is useless; and we are sure that missions, commanded as they are, shall not be without result. And in the sublimity of the vision vouchsafed to the Church, God manifested his will, that as fast as lands were discovered and peopled, they should be visited by the preachers of the Gospel. How was that command to St. John introduced—“Thou must prophesy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings?” There descended a mighty angel; a rainbow was in his hand; his face was as the sun, and his feet were as pillars of fire. And this angel set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and sware a sublime oath, touching the completion of the mystery of God. By this angel it was, thus standing on the sea and the earth, that John was directed to prophesy again, before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. Why this attitude? Why the right foot on the sea? Oh, might it not have been a prophetic indication, that there were shrouded in the bosom of the waters vast territories, whose existence was then unsuspected, but which, in the progress of time should emerge from the deep like a new creation, and double the sphere of the missionary exertion? The right foot on the sea, and the left foot on the land—that might have been to shew that the sea had its continents, and its islands, where the Roman eagle never flew, but which, rising hereafter from the sepulchre of centuries, should present new tracks on which to erect the banner of the cross.

We obey the prophetic summons. While there is a shore which the foot of the missionary hath not trodden, we will consider our office unfulfilled, as entrusted with the oracles of God: while there is a human being who hath never heard the tidings of redemption, we will not relax in prophesying again before nations, and tongues, and kings. We are still called to war; for the strong holds of idolatry and ignorance cover more than half the globe. But they are not impregnable. Do Thou, O God, go forth with our armies, and there shall be a triumphant and more growing demonstration, that “the weapons of our warfare, though not carnal, are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” We add no more, but commend the cause to your liberality.



## THE BIBLE THE GUIDE TO HEAVEN

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REV. J. SHERMAN.

SURREY CHAPEL, OCTOBER 19, 1834.

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"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."—PSALM cxix. 9.

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THE question proposed in my text, is supposed to have suggested itself to David when he was in public; and the answer which is here given, that which private experience enabled him to give. He therefore leaves it on record for future usefulness. Many other modes of cleansing his way had probably been proposed to him, and been applied by him; but none was found by experience to succeed, except this which he has recorded. He well knew the backwardness of young men to propose this question to themselves; he therefore proposes the question for them, and in case they should be at a loss for an answer, he gives the answer which his own experience, and the experience of all holy men, had found to be correct; had found to be most easy of application, and most successful in its operation.

Young men. whose interests are to engage our attention this night, you will easily perceive, from the words I have just read to you, that it is not my wish to engage your minds with abstruse metaphysical subjects: nor is it my wish to point out nice and philosophical distinctions. Mine is a plain subject, but a subject of incomparable and infinite importance; a subject which interests itself with your well-being, with your happiness in life, and with all your hopes beyond the boundaries of time. Will you allow me to ask—although I do not expect that anything else will be manifested by the respectable class whom I am now especially addressing—that you permit this subject to have its due weight and importance upon your minds? Considering it is of the importance which I have represented it, and which the Word of God declares it to be, will you endeavour this evening, while you sit under the sound of the Word of God, to put away from your minds all pre-conceived notions, all self-conceit, all pharisaic pride; and simply listen to the declarations of Divine Truth, as far as they shall be consistent with that Word which shall judge us at the last day? Will you attend to what is now to be delivered as men endowed with reason; as individuals who believe that God who made the mind, can sanctify and illumine that mind which he has made; as individuals who believe that it is but right that the God who has all things in his possession, should be entreated of by his creatures for any gifts which he has to bestow? I would that all of you, young

• Addressed to young men; more particularly to Medical Students.

men, may ask of God, this night, to give you a wise and understanding heart that you may receive and apply the truth, and believe and live.

I will claim your attention, therefore, to the two points of interest contained in the text. First, the text implies that the way of a young man is polluted; and, secondly, it asserts that the only method of cleansing that way is by a young man's attentive consideration of the Word of God.

The first point of interest contained in the text is, that **THE WAY OF A YOUNG MAN IS POLLUTED**; and therefore needs cleansing: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"

I shall presume, my dear hearers, that this question is proposed by yourselves; that you are each anxious to attain to a state of greater holiness and happiness than that which you now enjoy. Now, *a way* is a beaten track, over which travellers pass. "The kine," it is said, when tied to the cart in which the idols were placed—"The kine took the straight way towards Beth-shemesh." But the word "way," in our text, is not confined or restricted to this meaning. It is a figure of speech often used to describe the course of life by which an individual is led, and his manners and conduct in the world. Hence these phrases often occur: "God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted *his way* upon the earth." David says that "the Lord knoweth *the way* of the righteous, but *the way* of the ungodly shall perish." Jeremiah says, "O, Lord, I know that *the way* of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." By all these passages you will perceive, that the word "way," in our text, is intended to mean the course of life, conduct, and manners, which an individual pursues.

Young men, you are travellers to eternity: you are travellers either to eternal happiness, or to eternal woe. There is a strait gate, and a narrow way, that leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it: and there is a wide gate, and a broad way, that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat. Now, into these two several gates and paths you enter by that particular way of Divine Providence in which you are led; called, in the text, "*his way*:" "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse *his way*;" that is, his *peculiar way*. For, while some are destined to poverty, others are raised to affluence; some tread the walks of seclusion, others the path of honour; some walk in the paths of learning and science, others in the more humble walks of life; some tread the path of affliction, and others the path of health. But, oh, young man, be it known unto you, that whatever path you tread, or by whichever way you enter into one of the paths which I have stated—whether you are in the capacity of a servant to a master, or a pupil to a teacher, or an apprentice to an instructor, or a child to a parent—in this way, young men, you are travelling, as fast as time permits you, either to eternal happiness or to eternal woe.

Let me deeply impress on the minds of all my youthful audience, that God has not placed you in this world simply to attain that knowledge which might fit you for benefiting your fellow creatures, or by which you might gain wealth, or by which you might attain respectability in society. That is not the great end of existence; that never can be to a moral agent; that never can be to an immortal mind: there must be something higher in the end and design of God than all this, in putting you in the path of life which you now tread. That

and which He has designed is, to obtain likeness to himself, a fitness for heaven, and, finally, a residence with Him in glory.

May I be permitted, before I proceed further, to entreat all the young men present for one single moment just to put this question to their consciences, and to allow conscience to do its office for a short time. Ask yourselves, O young men, as in the presence of the great God, what is the end you have in view in life. Is it the glory of the God that made you, and the salvation of the soul he gave you? If so, happy are you. Now, assuming that every one here present is anxious to obtain life everlasting, it must be told you, dear young men, that so many snares and pollutions are in the way by which you are seeking this, that you are in great danger of losing it, and therefore your way needs cleansing. Original sin has polluted this way. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It was

" the fruit

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

And not only original sin, but there is something beyond it. The actual transgression of every individual has polluted his own way. I see these pollutions in all the stages of youth, and I see these pollutions in all the stations of youth.

I see them in *the stages* of youth. God looked down from heaven, and told us that, when he looked, the imagination of man's heart was evil from his youth, and that continually. In childhood I see numbers mocking a venerable prophet of God, saying, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head:" and God for this despite of his prophet, sent bears out of the wood who devoured them alive. At twelve years of age I see Manasseh commencing a course of impiety which was strewn with crimes of the most dreadful kind—murder, idolatry, sorcery, adultery, and every foul vice. At sixteen years of age I see Uzziah first walking in the fear of God, and then filled with pride through the prosperity which God had bestowed upon him; scorning God's prophets: and God smote him with leprosy. At seventeen years of age I see Joseph sent by his father to visit his brethren; and these young men first cast him into a pit, and then sold him to the Ishmaelites as a slave. At twenty years of age I see Ahaz beginning with evil, which increased with his years in malignity and horror; till, with impunity, he burned his own children as sacrifices to his own gods, and banished the worship of God out of his land. At twenty-three years of age I see Jehoahaz doing "evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done," and God giving him, as a prisoner, into the hands of a heathen king for his impiety. At twenty-five I see Jehoiakim violating the principles and practice of probity, and falling a sacrifice to his own vices. O young men, every stage of life is polluted.

And every *station* of life is polluted too. In the palace, I see Absalom aiming at the throne through the murder of his own father. In that youth, who we are told possessed vast riches, and withal a most amiable moral rectitude, I see pharisaic pride, preventing his acceptance of the Saviour's advice. In the pride of human literature, I see Saul of Tarsus filled with prejudice against the harmless disciples of Christ, imprisoning them and slaughtering them for this their only

fault—that they loved and served the Saviour. In Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, I see duplicity and lying to such an extent that he deceives David himself, and robs his master of all his property. In David I see snares, and temptations, and sin, polluting his whole path, and the Lord only preserving him withersoever he went.

But why do I refer to others? Why do I go this round amongst others? Young men, allow me to conduct you a little way during the past history of your own lives. Has not *your* way been polluted? Examine it to-night. I say, Has not *your* way been polluted? How many sins can I charge you with to-night against your parents, against your consciences, against your God, against your Bible? How many Sabbaths have you profaned? How much prayer have you neglected? How many opportunities have you lost? How many mercies have you abused? Look back, young men, and see the past history of your lives. How many omissions of duty; how many errors in practice; how many dangers have you fallen into; how many temptations have beset you! And can you promise yourself that your future path shall be more free from temptation, or less exposed to danger? You carry in your own bosom the worst enemy you have to contend with—a desperately deceitful heart, and a mind at enmity with God. Oh, that heart of yours promises much, but seldom performs. You are exposed to the witcheries of a deceitful world, and the misery connected often with the allurements of bad companions. It may be that, to a great extent, many of you have escaped “the corruption that is in the world through lust;” it may be that your dispositions are extremely amiable, and that your general moral conduct in the world is not at all to be questioned: but will you allow me to say to you this evening, although this morality may be extremely praiseworthy, examine your duties, and will you not find an imperfection here, and a blot there—negligence in this opportunity, and defection in that duty? And how important, then, is the question, and how much more important the answer—“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” By taking heed to God’s word. Beloved, if your way is not cleansed, you perish; if your way is not cleansed according to God’s method, you perish.

We now proceed to the second part of our subject. The text asserts that **THE ONLY MODE OF CLEANSING THIS WAY EFFECTUALLY, IS BY PAYING DEVOUT ATTENTION TO GOD’S WORD:** “By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

By “thy word,” was meant here the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and attention to those was once sufficient to cleanse his way; but, now the New Testament is added to the Old, how much more effectual must it be now that the whole canon of Scripture is complete, and the way of salvation is fully developed! He is to “take heed” to this way; he is to inspect it carefully; he is to attend to it constantly.

But let me illustrate this, rather more than prove it by argument. I shall, in the first place, remind you, that if you wish to cleanse your way, you must consult it as a friend in your way; you must, secondly, compare it as a map with your way; and you must, thirdly, obey it as a charge for your way.

First, if you would cleanse your way, young men, you must consult it as *friend in your way*. I said you were travellers to eternity. How pleasant to



have a faithful and an affectionate guiding friend with us in our journey—a friend whom we can consult at all times, and who is so intimately acquainted with the right road that there is no danger of a mistake, and who is so deeply interested in our welfare that he entreats us to make use of him on all occasions. Now such, young men, in a pre-eminent degree, is the Word of God. I exhort you, therefore, all, to consult this Word for happiness and for direction. “Yes,” says some young man in this place, “but we must have confidence in a friend before we ought to trust him; and what proof have I that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and what proof do you give me that to the custody of the Scriptures I may safely entrust my immortal soul?” I have twelve proofs to give you, to which I beg your devout attention. Their antiquity, their conservancy, their variety, their brevity, their perspicuity, their harmony, their verity, their authority, their dignity, their glory, their excellency, their sufficiency.

We observe, first, their *antiquity* is a proof of their inspiration. No books of human composition go back farther than the flood, and, by many hundreds of years, not so far as the flood: but this book tells me of the creation of the world, and tells me how that world was created, consistent with the majesty and with the purity of God. If I look to any human authors, all the descriptions of the commencement of this world are fabulous and foolish; and not one gives me a consistent idea of the making of the globe on which I live: but the Bible tells me of this; and tells it me in such a way as commends itself to my understanding, my conscience, and my judgment, that this is the true statement, that this is the fact of the world’s creation. Now all antique things are prized by the curious: can, then, the Scriptures be despised, when an idol, or a piece of carved work, which have not half their antiquity, are treasured as a prize?

I spoke, secondly, of their *conservancy*. Amid the wreck of ages they have been preserved. The Jews loved and preserved the Sacred Writings; through all their wars, all their captivities, all their changes, all their sorrows, by the wonderful providence of God, the pages of inspiration were preserved. O what would the Pope have given to have destroyed this volume before now! O what mad attempts have been made to extirpate this volume from the earth! O what fires have been kindled to destroy this book! O what searches have been made after this blessed volume! Yet it exists, and it is preserved. He covered it with the hollow of his hand, and kept it under the shadow of his wing. Has God taken then such care of his Word, and will you despise it, young men?

Thirdly, their *variety* commends the Scriptures to you in a pre-eminent degree. What beautiful variety is there in the Scriptures, brethren, to please the ear, the eye, and the taste! Do you love history? Here are the histories of kingdoms and of countries, of kings and of princes, of judges and of warriors, of parents, and children, and servants. Do you read geography? Here is an exact description of mountains, and valleys, and cities, and towns, and gardens, and vineyards, and plains, and rivers, and springs. Do you love geology? Here is an exact description of the nature and structure of the earth. Do you study ethics? Here is a complete system of morals, superior to all the eloquence of Pliny, all the elegance of Seneca. Do you read of wars? Here are battles most

dreadful, and victories most triumphant. Do you study architecture? Here are forms and dimensions of buildings; and here are models of houses for residence, and temples for worship, palaces for kings, and cottages for peasants. Do you frequent the courts of judicature? Here are ecclesiastical and civil courts; trials by judges, and trials by juries, for capital and for minor offences. Do you study botany? Here is a description of various exotic, wild, and cultivated plants, medicinal, and useful, and fruitful, and odoriferous. Do you love poetry? Here you find it in its most elegant and sublime forms. What are the beauties of Burns to the Psalms of David? What are the raptures of Homer to the songs of Moses and of Deborah? What is the eloquence of Milton compared to the raptures of the inspired prophets? Do you study medicine? Here are representations of diseases most appalling, of cures most extraordinary: some effected by miracle, others effected by ordinary means—some by ablution, others by a touch. In one word, where can you find, in the same compass, a book equal to the Bible in such blessed and endless variety?

I present to you, fourthly, their *brevity*. Their character, my brethren, is, *multum in parvo*—much in little. Let me give you a few specimens. “God is love.” “God is light.” “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” “As ye would that others should do unto you, so do ye also unto them.” Let any person accustomed to read profane authors, and especially to read the most elegant authors, compare with them the twelfth chapter of the Romans; which, for brevity in the precepts that are administered to men, exceeds every thing which can be found in human law. Horace’s rule is here followed up—“Whatsoever is preceptive should be short.” It is only in the Scriptures that that rule is illustrated in its most perfect view. Now, my dear young friends, will you tell me why, in the third or fourth reading of any human author you ever studied, you could master that author; that you required nothing more than to read that author over a few times in order to get into the author’s spirit, and imbibe the author’s idea? And will you tell me why fresh beauties rise up out of the Word of God, though you may have read the same passage a hundred times over? A union, a beauty, a vigour, and a freshness, in these brief, but these powerful representations, force themselves upon the imagination, and compel you to believe that the Word of God is inspired.

I will point out, once more, their *perspicuity* as another reason. He that runs may read the Scriptures. The chief points of doctrine necessary to salvation, are understood frequently, as well by the wayfaring man as by the most learned. The doctrines and the style of Scripture are free from confusion, and free from error. The whole hemisphere is lighted up by the Sun of Righteousness itself, which casts beauty and glory upon the whole face of the Word of God.

Sixthly, There is their *harmony* also. One part does not contradict another, and is not contrary to another: though this sentiment has often been advanced. There are, my brethren, a beautiful harmony and consistency in the histories, the doctrines, and the precepts, of the Word of God. Dr. Kennecott, that most indefatigable student, tells us that he was at the pains to collect five hundred manuscripts, all of different ages: and what was the result of these five hundred manuscripts? Does he find thousands of discrepancies? He tells us that in

about the thirty-five thousand marginal readings—altered and amended reading—which might be found of many passages of Scripture, not one single error had crept in through the carelessness of the transcriber, which affected one single precept of Christianity, or one doctrine connected with salvation. And generally, the individuals who cry out most about a want of harmony in the Scriptures, are persons who study not their Author, who take one part and not the whole; else they would find parts which would illuminate that which appears dark and unsatisfactory.

Shall I add one more—their *verity*? For the truth of the Scriptures, we need only refer you, dear young men, to the accomplishment of prophecies. Those prophecies which were delivered many hundreds of years ago are fulfilling to this very day, and fulfilling to the very letter. I wish you would possess yourselves of Keith on the Prophecies; an abridgment of which is published by the Tract Society at the small price of a shilling; and I think that the reading of that volume must convince every unprejudiced mind of the inspiration of the Holy Writings. But open your eyes, my brethren, when you walk the streets of London, and look upon a Jew, and ask yourselves this question—How came this man here? Why is he in this land? Why is he in Jamaica? Why is he in Africa? Why is he in New Zealand? Why is he scattered over the face of the whole world? Why is he a by-word? Why is he a proverb? Why is he disregarded by almost all nations of the world? I see in this a proof, a direct proof, if there were no other, of the inspiration of the Sacred Volume—that so much as three thousand years ago, Moses, in the Book of Deuteronomy, prophesied that these very things should come to pass upon that nation; we being now in the year of the Christian era 1834.

Shall I allude to their *authority*? They come, my brethren, invested with all the authority of God himself. To all the important parts of Holy Writ, “Thus saith the Lord” is the preface. They demand of you and of me the most implicit belief, upon pain of eternal perdition. They urge duties with awful threatenings; and forbid vices with penal sanctions. O it is not left to a man’s choice whether he will have this or some other remedy for his fallen condition. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Shall I speak to you of their *dignity*? All that is God-like, all that is beautiful, all that is majestic, all that is sublime, is to be found in the style of the Scriptures. Our best historical painters choose them for the dignity and the sublimity of their representations; and our finest orators are indebted to this unfashionable volume for their richest and their finest sentiments.

Shall I speak to you of their *excellency*? In what does their excellency consist? In their adaptation to man’s estate. Man is a fallen and a ruined creature; and man wants a remedy for that condition. In the Bible, and the Bible only, his condition is explained, and his remedy is provided. Here he reads his disease, and in the same page he reads his cure. He sees himself polluted and guilty; and he here finds how the moral image of God can be again impressed on him, and the doors of heaven, which have been closed by his sin, can be made open to him again. And may I just take this opportunity to say, that perhaps this excellency in the Scriptures, is the reason why so many young men turn them out of their chambers and their reading rooms? Young man,

may I ask you to-night, in the presence of God, if the Bible allowed vice, would you not love it? If it tolerated iniquity, would you not prize it? If it allowed those pleasures which fascinate and gratify your appetites and passions, would you not cherish it? Is not the great secret of enmity to the Bible that it insists upon holiness, and declares that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord?"

Shall I speak to you of their *sufficiency*? Had a person no other book in the world, this book is enough to comfort him in sorrow, direct him in duty, encourage him in difficulty, warn him in danger, and save his immortal soul: and if he had all the books in the world, without this, they could neither comfort a human soul, nor save that soul. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

But the final proof is their *glory*. O, see the wonders they have effected! See three thousand converted by them from the ways of sin in one day; see the domestic peace they have cast amongst families; see the comforts they have given; see the holy changes they have made in moral character; see the hospitals in the Metropolis which they have built; see the missionaries they have sent forth: through them the wilderness and the solitary place are glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. Rome, in its glory, could boast of its palaces, its arches, its pillars, its bridges, its theatres, and its cities; but not a single penitentiary or almshouse, not an hospital or infirmary, was to be discovered within its walls. These are the triumphs of Christianity; these are the glories of the defamed Bible.

Now these, young men, are the proofs which I have to present to you, that this Bible will be a friend to you, and a friend, the consulting of which will greatly aid and greatly bless you.

But I still feel an objection whispering in some young man's ear, who would, perhaps, if he might, utter it. It is not fashionable, some say, to read the Bible: every polite and intelligent companion would ridicule your study of the Bible. Perhaps their politeness and their intelligence might be questioned in such a deed as this. But be it so. Are there no dignified, intelligent, and honorable men, who read their Bibles? What think you of Moses, the greatest legislator that ever ruled? He wrote the law, and he read it. What think you of Joshua, the greatest captain that ever held a sword? And there was not a word of all that Moses wrote that Joshua did not read. What think you of Nehemiah, who was cupbearer to the king of Persia? What think you of the Bereans, who were "more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures, to see if these things were so?" What think you of Timothy, that highly-elevated, that dignified and excellent youth, who is commended by the Apostle for his practice of searching and studying the Word of God? But do not let me confine myself to days of yore; let me come down to days not far distant; let me not forget my own land. King Edward the Sixth diligently read the Bible. When Queen Elizabeth had the Bible presented to her at her coronation, she received it with both hands, and, kissing the Bible, pressed it to her bosom, and said that that blessed Book of God had been all her consolation and direction in her captivity. And it is well known, that our late venerable monarch, King George the Third, not only read the Bible himself,



and studied it too, but recommended it to his subjects, and declared that it had been his desire all his life that every child in his kingdom should be able to read the Bible. But most of the greatest men England ever knew were lovers of the Bible. You have the examples, my brethren, and encouragements of the wisest and noblest men of our land, to consult and be edified by the Word of God. I do not like the charge which has been brought against it, that it is suited only to weak minds. Let us see if we cannot find some noble and intelligent spirits who were students of the Word of God. Are you a poet? Consult your Bible. Milton, Thomson, Cowper, Young, read and studied their Bible. Are you a statesman? Littleton and Vansittart say, "Read your Bible." Are you a philosopher? Bacon, Locke, Newton, the three greatest minds that England ever produced, were readers and students of the Bible. Are you a moralist? Johnson, Addison, Steele, were readers of their Bible. Are you a lawyer? Hale, Blackstone, Erskine, say, "Read your Bible." Are you in the ministry, or are you preparing for it? What honour Doddridge, Watts, and a thousand others, gained by reading their Bible. Are you a physician? Lettsome, Good, and, you will not forget, Buchan, read their Bibles, and recommend you to read it.

Now, my dear young men, place against this array of moral minds and moral characters, the comparatively feeble intellects, and the injurious course of life of those who thus question the authority of revelation: and on whose side will the evidence preponderate? I fear not the question; I dread not the examination.

Dr. Hawker says that, when he left his home to go to sea, his beloved and pious mother took him into her closet before she permitted him to go on the sea voyage; and after kneeling down and praying with the devoted youth, she took a little pocket Bible out of her closet, and presented it to him, saying, "Robert, as you love me, as you love your soul, as you hope to go to heaven, I charge you to read one verse of this Bible every day." And did not, young man, your fond mother put the Bible into your hand when she sent for you to bid you farewell, when you left home for this great Metropolis? And does not that book sometimes look you in the face, and many regrets steal over your mind that it has been suffered to accumulate dust for the want of perusal or study? O, remember your father or your mother's charge, and read your Bible. Young man, let the world frown, and let the ungodly reprobate your conduct, I say, read and study your Bible; the smile of God, and the peace of conscience will more than counterbalance a universe of frowns. And in order to entice you to do this, let me read to you what God says. He declares that "she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her:" that the individual who possesses himself of the excellences of this Book shall "never perish, but have everlasting life."

But it is already time that I should, in the second place, advert to another point. I said you were to consult it as a friend in your way; I now say, secondly, you must *compare it as a map with your way*. Young men, you have entered a dangerous road, full of traps and snares, beset at every path with some soul-deceiving bait. Here, among the worst, perhaps, of your foes, you will meet with many deceitful friends, who will tell you of the excellence of sin, the pleasure of its enjoyment, and the reward of its perpetration; and, as soon as they have enticed you to commit it, cut you off, and turn away from you.

Like Judas, they will say, "Hail, Master," kiss you, and betray you: like Joao, they will kiss you, and stab you under the fifth rib. And there you will have to contend with the most implacable enemies: there the bewitching snares of a gay world—sin, and the enemy that lieth in your way, endeavour to entrap you and bring you into ruin. But who would think of travelling in such a land without a map or a guide? Who would think of taking a dangerous voyage without a pilot, or a chart? And such, young man, is your conduct, if you are living without taking heed to the Bible. The Bible is a map, drawn by Infinite Wisdom, correct in all its parts, descriptions, and definitions. Now never was it heard, since this Bible was brought into existence, that a mariner or a traveller was lost who followed its counsel; but thousands have been lost who had this map, and would not use it. Now, in this map, two ways are marked out—the way of life, and the way of death. Just, for a brief time, let us follow a little the track of the latter, and observe a few of the places marked on this map, which are filled with danger, and which it is desirable that we should avoid.

The first place I shall mention marked on this map is *Robbery Tent*. It was inhabited by one Achan, whose covetous eye saw the wedge of gold, and the shekels of silver, and he took them into his tent, contrary to God's commandment. Now just near that spot, lest any young man should be enticed to the same act, there is a finger-post marking the lot of this individual, and saying, "Neither thieves nor covetous shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Near this spot is marked another, and that is *Intemperance Lodge*. It was inhabited by one Nabal, of Maon, who had great estates, but who was smitten of God in a fit of drunkenness; and for the warning of all travellers is **this** finger-post: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit: for drunkards shall not see the kingdom of God."

See also another spot—*Liar's Graves*, leading to *Liar's Lake*. They contain the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, who, when telling a lie, were struck dead in the presence of the multitude: and near this spot, to caution all imitators, you may read in legible characters, "All liars shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Adjoining to this is marked on the map, *Infidelity Lanes*. One of them is between the mountains where Pharaoh and his army, disbelieving the threatenings of God, plunged themselves into the sea, and were all drowned by God for their infidelity. Another of these lanes is before Jerusalem, where Sennacherib and his army boastingly asked, who was God that he should obey him, and who was the Almighty that he should be under his control: and an angel was sent to smite a hundred and eighty-five thousand of his army in one single night, for his infidelity. Now, lest any should imbibe this sentiment, their doom is posted up, as you will find towards the conclusion of the first chapter of the book of Proverbs: "For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

I have another spot to show you: there is *the Enchanted Ground*. On this spot, young man, is the blandishment of beauty, and the enticement of wicked women. Are you on the borders of this ground? I ask again, are you on the borders of this ground? Take out your map, and see how many souls it has

deceived and ruined. It was this that put the sore into David's bones all his days; it was this which commenced and perfected Absalom's destruction; it was this which stole the heart of one of the wisest men from God, and stole peace from his soul; it was this, beloved, that caused Herod to murder the best of men, because John said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." I ask again, young men, are you on the border of this land?

"Stop, poor sinner, stop, and think;  
Oh think before you go;  
Will you sport upon the brink  
Of everlasting woe?

"Once again I charge you stop;  
Unless you warning take,  
Ere you are aware you'll drop  
Into the burning lake."

Are you on this ground? Are you not only on the borders of it, but are you on this ground? I say to you, what St. Paul said to Timothy: "Flee, young man, for your life, flee youthful lusts which war against the soul." Methinks I hear the trumpet sounding the alarm at you, young traveller, and declaring in your hearing what the end of all this must be. "Hearken unto me, now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

We will look at one more spot marked on this map; that is *Pleasure Hall*. It was occupied once in Babylon by Belshazzar, and his concubines, and his lords, and his ladies, and his captains, and the great men of the land. Profane mirth abounded in this hall. The vessels of the temple were brought out, and filled, and desecrated to a profane use; and they toasted their friends and their companions, and they praised the gods of wood and stone, which their own hands had made. But in the midst of their feasting, a hand came and wrote upon the wall—"MENE, MENE, TEHEL, UPHARSIN—Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." The prince's loins began to shake, and his knees began to tremble; and he called for the magicians of the empire, who had been accustomed to comfort him in the midst of his distresses; but there was none to speak to him, none to offer a word of consolation. Daniel was brought in. Daniel had only time to read his doom, and to tell him that the Medes were at his gates, and that the city and kingdom were rent from him from that instant.

My dear young friends, will you follow me in the track of the *path of life* for a moment or two, that we may mark a few more things and spots. I see, beneath the walls of Eden, I see the place where Abel, the youthful shepherd, was martyred for the cause of God. I see Enoch, when he was a young man, (for he died at about thirty years old of our present computation), walking with God like a familiar friend, and God honouring him with freedom from death. I see Noah, when a young man, believing God's word, building an ark, preaching righteousness, and warning the world. I see Abraham, while youthful, leaving his father's country, and his father's house, at God's commandment, God blessing him with honour and riches, and spreading his name

throughout all lands ; so that Jews and Gentiles vie with each other to have Abraham's name. I see Jacob, a servant to his unkind uncle, the sun scorching him by day, and the frost biting him by night ; his uncle changes his wages, yet his covetous heart at parting with him is obliged to acknowledge from the honourable conduct of Jacob, " I have learned by experience, that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." I see Joseph as a steward, resisting the most violent and ensnaring attacks on his virtue and integrity : he is cast into prison, though innocent ; but the Lord was with Joseph, and Joseph was a prosperous man ; for the prison was the way to the throne. I see Moses, the prince of Midian, when he was of years (that is, forty years of age) refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and choosing rather to suffer affliction with the children of God, and God ennobling his name, and loading him with spiritual and temporal blessings. I see Joshua, while yet hoary hairs were far from him, protesting before his brother officers, that whatever they did, that whatever the priests of the nation might do, " As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Young men, all these are marked on the map with this title, " Them that honour me I will honour."

Once more. If you would have your way thoroughly cleansed, then you must obey the Scriptures *as a charge for your way*. When Jacob was about to leave his home, his father Isaac gave him a charge. When Joshua was about to take the command of the army, Moses gave him a charge. When Timothy was about to enter the ministry, Paul gave him a charge. And what are the Scriptures ? Why the Scriptures are a charge which Christ gives you, young men, for your journey in life. With what emphasis does this charge come to you ! Beloved, dying words of parents often leave an indelible impression. Perhaps some of them may be registered in your memory to-night ; and the recollection of the scenes you have witnessed, may rise up before your eyes and your minds. But this charge has the emphasis of the blood, the groans, and the exaltation of a dying and an immaculate Saviour. Here he declares to you, that because you have sinned, you require two things to cleanse your way ; his blood and righteousness to cleanse your way from its guilt, that justice may not condemn you, and the law may not arrest you : " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." He declares to you also, in the second place, that the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, are necessary to renovate and to sanctify your nature : " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now, dear young men, do not begin, I beseech you, by mending first this branch of your conduct and then the other. The house must not be repaired and patched here and there ; it must be pulled down, the foundations and all. The tree must not be pruned and lopped here and there ; it must be rooted up entirely : the root of that tree is underneath, and the fruits of that tree correspond with the root. And therefore it will not do to patch up this house or to attempt to mend it ; it must be altogether altered, and you must begin anew. O, do not be like the man that confesses his house is out of repair, and in some danger of falling in, but will not be convinced that the foundation is rotten, and that it must be entirely rebuilt or it will involve him in ruin. Young man, let me entreat you to think not of trying any experiment by yourself, of adopting this course and that method to reform your character ; but



go back to the beginning; begin your life over again, begin as if you had not trodden one step, and begin with Christ. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Young men, begin with Christ. Hear him saying to you in a voice sweeter than the music of the spheres, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Does the burden of sin lie heavy on your conscience for past transgressions; and do you thirst for pardon? Hear him speak to you: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Are you afraid that any of your good works will constitute a righteousness fit to adorn you in the sight of God? Hear him speak: "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted:" behold my everlasting righteousness, my glories, my sufficiency. O, come at once to Christ; begin your way through the appointed medium for your soul's sake.

O, young men, my mouth is open, my heart is enlarged towards you. Forgive me if I have trespassed too long on your patience this evening; forgive me if I have tired any one in this assembly this evening: but the matter is important; it is a matter of life, and it is a matter of death. When I descend these stairs I may never see my audience more from this pulpit: I may be called to the bar of God to give an account of the sermon I have preached; and you to give an account of the sermon you have heard. O, young men, what is to be your decision to-night? What is your mind made up to? What do you determine by the grace and strength of God to do? To persist in a course of sin and vanity; still to pursue the same paths which have bred so much distress in your minds, and sown so many thorns on your pillows? Is it so? Do you determine, and is this your solemn resolve—to neglect and to turn a deaf ear to the advice that is given you to-night? Then, without any argument of the preacher, you must meet the preacher another day, and you must meet the Master of the preacher and your Master too; and there at his bar, when the poor individual who now addresses you is asked, "Did you warn that young man in the Metropolis, did you tell him of his danger, did you point out me as the source of life and happiness, did you tell him that he must perish without he came to me and lived?" the preacher shall turn to you and say "Let him speak for himself." And what will your conscience answer, beloved?

I have only another idea; and it is this which makes me anxious to recover you out of the snares of the devil. O, be persuaded to-night to stop one moment, and ask yourselves, What do I expect at the end of the journey I am going? What do I promise myself at the end? It would be a sad thing for a labouring man to work six days in the week, and at the end to have no wages. And what do you promise yourself, young man, at the end of a course of folly.

will ask you to-night, and let your conscience be my witness, "What fruit have ye had already in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." Young men, you may now love your work, which is sin; and you may love your master, who is Satan: but, believe the preacher, believe the Word of Life, you will never love your wages; for "the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## THE FALLIBILITY OF HUMAN JUDGMENT.

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REV. E. CRAIG, A.M.

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“ But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”—1 SAMUEL, xvi. 7.

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WHEN the Lord rejected Saul from reigning over Israel, he sent his prophet Samuel to the house of Jesse, in Bethlehem, to anoint one of his sons, whom he had chosen king. When Samuel arrived at Bethlehem, in obedience to the will of God, he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice: and as the sons of Jesse came before him in succession, the prophet exercised his judgment upon them, with a view to determine, by his own natural means of knowledge, and the principles which experience had led him to establish in his own mind, on which of them it was probable the crown of Israel was to be bestowed. He fell, however, into error; he was misled, as many are, by outward appearance: for when he compared the stately external form of Eliab with his brethren, he said, “ Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.” But the Lord God, who dwelleth in the depths of man's heart, answered, and corrected the unuttered suggestion of Samuel's mind, and showed him the error into which he had fallen. “ The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart.”

Now, here is a principle of the divine government which is well worthy your attention; for it is put before us in direct contrast with our own natural tendencies and habits; and put before us in a way powerfully calculated to show us the fallacy and the carnality of our own mode of judging of each other. “ The Lord seeth not as man seeth.” Now, it is not to be supposed that man is condemned because he has not the omniscience of the Deity: it is not man's sin that he does not look at the heart; he cannot look at the heart; it is abundantly proved that, in his attempts to judge the heart, he falls into greater error than when he judges by the countenance.

But the error into which Samuel fell, and into which the majority of men fall, is, a carnal readiness to form a conclusion, in a matter not delegated to them, upon inadequate grounds. It is wisdom in such a case to recognize our unfitness to form a judgment, owing to the scanty range of our knowledge: and yet we see how frequently the reverse is the case, and how, on inadequate grounds, men rush to an immediate conclusion. In the present instance, how

thoroughly inadequate were the grounds on which even the prophet of the Lord allowed himself to determine a point which the Lord had promised to do for him. The first individual whom the Lord had appointed king over Israel, appears to have been a man of a high commanding person, but of very defective moral character. When he stood among the people, he was higher, from his shoulders and upward, than any of them. When, therefore, Samuel went to seek among the sons of Jesse a successor to the throne, and his eye rested upon the superior stature and countenance of Eliab, led by the form of Saul who had been first chosen, and deceived by the undue influence which personal appearance evidently has on the human mind, he concluded at once that Eliab must be king. He suffered all the testimony of his experience, founded on Saul's wilful and impenitent conduct, to be silenced by the outward personal attractions of Eliab: and, though he had manifest proof of the unfitness of Saul for the throne, he did not allow himself to entertain the idea which his experience might have suggested to him, that, in this case also, a comely exterior might cover a weak understanding and a depraved heart.

This, then, is the difference between the judgment of man and the judgment of God. God looks through all the motives, and forms a just and impartial judgment from all the premises before him: man sees but little indeed; but he forms a hasty, and partial, and inferior judgment from all the evidence that is really before his eyes. Samuel was not warranted in coming to the conclusion he did come to: it was unfair, and was not the necessary result of his experience, but his own voluntary, unadvised, and hasty act; it was not his ignorance, but his error; it was not his misfortune, but his sin.

It is a sin, also, to which *we* are all sadly prone. There are certain external gifts, both of body and of mind, that obtain the applause of men; and these are too frequently allowed to carry away our approbation, when far higher and more excellent qualifications are suffered to sink into insignificance. The various scenes of life present unnumbered instances of the evil to which we refer. With a view, therefore, to correct this evil, allow me to illustrate it by a reference to several facts of Scripture; and then draw from the whole some inferences which may tend to our own profit.

In the first place, GOD SEETH NOT AS MAN SEETH: "for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." He looks through the outward covering, and his piercing eye cannot be deceived by the mystery and the gloss of human cunning or pretence. A pleasing exterior or manner cannot hide from him the sin of the heart; nor can he be turned aside by a defective form, or an uneducated mind or manner, from the brightness of moral excellence. The judgment of God can take no bias whatever from the weakness and ignorance of man; it takes no account of the admiration or of the scorn of the creature.

The Scripture supplies us with some very striking cases which exemplify this impartial judgment of the Lord. *The judicial decision in the garden of Eden* is a remarkable instance of it. Our fallen parent first attempted to set up a plea of innocence, and even endeavoured, for a while, to be ignorant of the crime which had been committed; and subsequently, when all the three transgressors are brought before God, an attempt is made, both by Adam and Eve,

to throw the blame from themselves. But how wisely and justly does the holy Lord God discriminate between them, and so fairly apportion to each their due measure of punishment, as to leave it beyond all question that "the Lord searcheth the heart."

There are some striking instances in which God marks and discerns the wickedness that is unseen by man. The instance of *Enoch* is one of these. The ungodly men of his days had spoken hard speeches against him, and derided him and his prophecies: but, in the mean time, "Enoch walked with God;" and the eye of God was upon him, and he saw not as men seeth, but, judging righteous judgment, laid up an indelible record of the ungodly speeches which ungodly men had spoken, and removed his servant by a triumphant translation to a happier world, where his walk should be nearer and unclouded.

The history of *Moses* presents to us a similar instance. In his early endeavours to reform and benefit his people, he was misunderstood; and, having interfered for their welfare at the risk of his life, he was driven by the unfair and treacherous conduct of those whom he laboured to serve, to leave the palace and to seek shelter in the wilderness. But there the Lord recognised him as a chosen and faithful servant; and from hence, at length he called him to be the leader and commander of his people, and the law-giver to the whole world.

There is a still more striking case in the mysterious dealing of God with *Job*. The misfortunes which burst simultaneously upon him, deceived his best friends, and judging from outward appearances, they pronounced him a wicked man, and called on him, as a matter of absolute duty, to justify God, and acknowledge his sin, and those remarkable visitations as his punishment. But, in the midst of all these trials, the Lord knew him to be "a just man, one who feared God and eschewed evil;" and, in the end, he brought forth his judgment as the light, and his righteousness as the noon-day.

We pass on to the instance of *the Redeemer* himself. Our blessed Lord was regarded by the priesthood and the people as a madman and a deceiver—as one who was possessed by an unclean spirit: and in the last crisis of his sufferings, while some regarded him as a wicked man brought justly to his end, justly smitten of God, and afflicted for his crimes, others reviled him with the manifest impotency of his pretensions, and, drowning the very cry of natural humanity in their own bosoms, even in the very hour of his agony they cried, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." Yet, with all the meekness of a silent, unresisting submission to an ignominious death, as if he deserved the disgrace, the Almighty Father regarded him in the very crisis of his humiliation, as "the Elect in whom my soul delighteth; my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; the Man who is my fellow." Dying a felon's death, and estimated as a felon by the people, that death was regarded by Omniscience as the glory of the divine government, as the emphatic demonstration of the divine wisdom and power, as the bliss and the salvation of the world. Having "a countenance more marred than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," the Lord regarded him as the medium through which he would shine into men's hearts, and declare the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Men accounted him a blasphemer; but the Lord declared that "grace and truth were in his lips." Men regarded his death as



a satisfaction due to the broken law of his own nation ; the Lord accounted him the spotless victim in the cause of redeeming mercy. There never has been a more striking exemplification of the difference between the judgment of God, and that of man. Man saw nothing but the depth of the ignominious humiliation to which the Redeemer gratuitously devoted himself ; the Lord looked to the fathomless depth of love and pity which prompted his propitiatory sacrifice. "Man looketh upon the outward appearance ; but the Lord looketh on the heart."

A similar difference of estimation, also is found with reference to the *Apostles*, the first preachers of Christian truth. Men thought lightly of their character. "I think," says St. Paul, "that God hath set forth us, the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death : for we are made a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake : we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." And in another place, he speaks of their being regarded as "reprobates." But what in the midst of this contempt of men, is the judgment of God ? "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." They were approved by the divine wisdom as the ministers of God, and in all their varied labours they had his testimony with them. So that, according as they were differently esteemed by God and by men, they exhibited in their own persons that extraordinary confidence which St. Paul has put on record : "As deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well known ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

These are some of the instances given in the infallible record of the favourable judgment of God, of those whom the world has despised. We may just glance at other instances, where those who obtain the favourable estimation of men, stood condemned before Him who searcheth the heart. This was the case with *Saul*, who was still honoured before the people, long after God had rejected him : with *Absalom*, whose personal appearance stole away the hearts of the people, and seduced the subjects of David from their rightful sovereign : with *Nebuchadnezzar*, who, walking in his pride, commanded the adoration of his people to a golden image, which he blasphemously set up to represent himself : and the Lord doomed him seven years to a degraded condition in the wilderness. It was the case also with *Herod*, who, while the people cried, seduced by his oratory, "It is the voice of a god, and not the voice of a man," was smitten by the angel of the Lord, and was eaten of worms, because he gave not the glory to God. We find also, in the prophecies of *Ezekiel*, a record of the different esteem which God forms from men of the worshippers in those days : "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." In the same way we are told of those, who, in the days of our Lord, appeared to pray, but inwardly were full of hypocrisy ; and of those, who in the last day shall say, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works ?" to whom he will say, "Depart, I never knew you."

The instances we have thus noticed will serve as a satisfactory illustration of the fact. We see from them how different is the judgment of God from the judgment of men ; and how different are his means of judging from theirs.

To him the heart is open: all things are naked before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. He lays bare the inward parts, just as the knife exposed the inward parts of the sacrifice; and, for this purpose, his word is "quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword," working in the hearts and consciences of men, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

We ought to ENDEAVOUR TO PROFIT BY THESE CONSIDERATIONS: and although we cannot impart to ourselves the accuracy of full and unerring observation and judgment, yet, at least, the consideration of the circumstances in which we are placed, and of our tendency to error, ought to lead us to watch with jealousy the judgment we form, remembering that we are not in a state of infallibility, and that it is seen at the bar of Him who executeth righteousness.

In the first place, then, *we should suspect the judgment that we form of the outward appearance, and the importance we are sometimes led to attach to it.* The case recorded in the text is one special proof, out of many, of the vast importance attached to the outward form. How many there are who value others, or esteem themselves, merely on account of a little superiority of form; forgetting how great the probability that a more agreeable form may cover a worse heart; forgetting how soon it is to die; and how vain it is to claim superiority and precedence over each other on such poor and perishable grounds as these. O, what labour, study, and expense are bestowed by many thereon, to bring into notice that outward form, on which the worm must speedily feast. Let such persons remember that God looketh at the heart. He who scatters the brilliant ornaments on the insect's wing, judges not by the outward appearance, but by the state of the heart. Why should we estimate so highly that which is so soon to decay? Let us learn from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and from the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, the madness of priding ourselves on distinctions which a single hour may destroy.

*How erroneous is the estimate that men in general are disposed to form of character.* We yield the meed of our applause without hesitation to certain combinations of character, which we see calculated to attract and to dazzle. We bow before the display of human power in its demonstrations in the different paths of science and philosophy. We follow in the train of the bold and the bustling—applaud the men of ready wit and fluent diction: but how frequently do we pass, unnoticed, the men of quiet and unobtrusive habits, and despise the patient investigator because he is not adorned with that which is fitted to attract, in order to regard that which is most calculated to produce effect. We should remember that God "divideth unto every man severally as he will;" and while he will assuredly require a strict account from every man of the talent committed to his trust, he will as strictly require of each the way in which the gifts have been received which he bestowed severally on his servants.

How false is the estimate we form of character generally. We are perpetually the slaves of our own prejudices: led by a few external blandishments, we mistake that which is faulty for that which is good, and account all that glitters gold. In every class of society, and every pursuit of life, what ruinous error in this respect obtains. Both in the business of the world and in the Church of God, men judge by other rules than the balance of the sanctuary, and frequently become the prey and the victim of their own folly. If we really look out for

men as our friends, patterns, teachers, or guides, men who wear the religion of our blessed Master—if, instead of hastily saying with Samuel, when he pronounced of Eliab, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him,”—if we waited, and prayed, and examined, we should be spared many a disappointment; they who were really worthy of our regard would be made manifest; and of others, the gradual development would declare in reference to them, “Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.” In all these several cases, let us suspect ourselves; let us move forward cautiously, watching with jealousy over our own hearts; and we shall be saved from many a sinful disposition.

How much deeper is our error in the defective and partial standard by which we judge *ourselves*; and yet we are willing to acknowledge we stand on a very different ground for judgment. Conscience brings us near to God; even *we* do not bear with the outward appearance. No man can so completely turn away from his inward conscience as not to know something that is passing within—something of his defects; in some measure, in fact, to look at the heart. One of the great sins of men, however, is the settled, resolute habit of looking only to external and superficial merits, and trying to destroy all consciousness of the future by the follies of the life that is present. But this will never do. The man will not be judged by his attainments, but his opportunities; and if, through wilfulness, we remain ignorant of self, ignorant of that humbling knowledge which all might attain, our Judge will deal with us, not by what we have turned away from, but by what we ought to have discovered. It is an awful sinfulness of the heart not to come to the light that is provided in order that our deeds may be made manifest. But when we come to avail ourselves of the power of conscience, which God has bestowed upon us, and to scrutinize our thoughts, our affections, our motives, by the light of truth, what a humiliating thought to us is that of God’s omniscience. The kingdom of God is within. We make a fair show in the flesh; we preserve from external exposure that which is evil: and so man, who “looks on the outward appearance,” often gives his fellow men credit for humility, and devotion, and love, to a degree far beyond their several attainments. But “the Lord looketh on the heart.” Yes; the sudden and half-formed thought—the treachery and restlessness of vanity and self-conceit—the suppressed voice of secret jealousy—the bitterness of malevolence—the cringing of servility—the swellings of pride—all are before Him who searches the heart, and tries the reins of the children of men. There is no deceiving the great Judge; neither a voluntary humility, nor a sound philosophy, nor a sanctimonious exterior, nor a devotional attitude, nor a calling him “Lord, Lord,” will avail in the place of an honest heart, a sincere repentance, a faith unfeigned.

And even in the most devoted servant of the people of God, how much cause is there for him to abhor himself. How much is there to make us blush when we think that the holy eye of God is upon us. If we rightly felt our guilty condition, how could we indulge a haughty carriage, a boastful diction, or a flaunting behaviour? If we thought of the eternity to which we are destined, how little should we think of bodily or mental distinction; how little we should pride ourselves on talents, or acquirements, or attractive manners! How should we dwell on the magnitude of our own deliverance from eternal ruin; and think only of the free grace which is extended to the whole race of mankind.

Consider again, *how this view of the dealings of God exalts the grace of*



*redemption.* God looks through every exterior form which may cover the heart. How terrible is his book of remembrance, the indestructible register of the evil deeds of all his creatures! Nothing can hide from him the doings of each and every one of the innumerable host. But while the Lord looked at the heart of man, and rightly estimated all its manifold dealings, he determined to redeem him. "The Lord looked down from heaven," we are told; and when he saw that there was none righteous—no, not one, then his own arm brought salvation. He knew the amount of the evil that was in the creature he determined to redeem, or the remedy would not have been adequate. But what a thought it is that the Lord should so provide for the cure of sin in all its disgusting forms, and, in his pity, should blot it out for ever by the blood of his own Son! To an ignorant man, a stranger to the extent of sin, this may appear light and trifling; but to him who knows the strength of corruption by his own daily and resolute struggle against it—to him who watches his own thoughts—to him who has seen the torch of scriptural truth flashing its holy light through the chambers of imagery within—to him who is gradually becoming conformed to the method of judging of that God who "looketh at the heart," it becomes the subject of daily and increasing wonder that the Lord should even turn in mercy towards a being so low as man. It is almost inconceivable that such a price should be paid for such a race; and nothing but such evidence as God has vouchsafed, could make us believe it.

"The Lord looketh at the heart." If his inspection is such at all times, *how much more solemn is the thought of his coming, when he shall judge the secrets of men's hearts at the last day!* The hour is coming when we must all stand before the bar of God; and he shall judge the world in righteousness. That thought ought to come with all solemnity and force on the mind of every responsible being. To that God who looketh on the heart we must give account of every idle word. Oh, let men pause as they think of the account they must give. Let memory run back on the doings of past years—on the secret thoughts, speculations, and desires. What say you to your sins—the whole catalogue of a life of sin, finding you out at the last day? What say you to meet the guilt of your past sins, and to bear the indignation of the Lord in the day of his fierce anger? That day will bring to light all our vanity, and anger, and malice, and covetousness. What a scene shall we each then behold! How vain will then be all the flimsy concealments by which we hide ourselves from men! The naked heart, as it has been in its naked defilement ever to God, shall then be laid before the universe.

How blessed, my brethren, to have found, ere that day come, a real friend in the mercy of the Omnipotent God himself—to have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope he has set before us—and to have found peace in his pardoning blood. It is blessed indeed when the forgiven sinner finds his happiness in God. "Thou hast redeemed me; thou calledst me by thy name; I am thine. All my trials, all my infirmities are before thee: my interests are under thy protection and care; and to thee all the vicissitudes of my being, and all the variations of my frame, and all the internal trials of my spirit, are fully known." It is blessed indeed, when, through covenant mercy, we find our habitual repose and consolation in those infinite attributes of equity and power, which, but for the exercise of mercy, necessarily would have been to us, a consuming fire.



## THE BLESSEDNESS OF BLESSING

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“ The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”  
PROVERBS, xi. 25.

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THE book of Proverbs contains a perfect code of rules for the guidance of human life. There can be no doubt that whosoever will take this book as his monitor, and will walk in the way that it prescribes, will, in the highest and best sense, be most prosperous and successful in all his ways. The great object of the book is to exhibit to us the different consequences flowing from opposite principles, and opposite sources of conduct. It gives us the assurance that a course of conduct founded upon the divine will, and regulated by the divine precepts, will be attended with ultimate prosperity; and, on the contrary, that where the temptation to present gratification is yielded to, at the expense of principle, ultimate evil must flow from it.

Such an assurance pre-eminently implies the continued control and direction of a superintending Providence. For, it must be admitted, the natural tendency of things in this present fallen world, is by no means such as to secure a prosperous result to rectitude of conduct, and failure to that of a contrary character. It must be admitted that we often witness the inversion of this order; the wicked succeed in their plans of unrighteousness, while, to all appearance, the righteous often suffer, not only notwithstanding their righteousness, but even on account of it.

How, then, are we to reconcile this matter of fact with the authority of the inspired Word of God? Does it not seem to contradict the whole testimony of this book, indited, as we know it is, by the Spirit of God? In order to the solution of this difficulty, we must consider the character of the dispensation under which this book was written. The Jews were ostensibly, as well as really, under the immediate government of God; a government sanctioned by temporal rewards and punishments. On condition of their obedience they were promised great temporal prosperity; and, on the other hand, judgments of a temporal character in case of disobedience. This gave to the government of God over them what we may term *a visible character*. There was an ostensible Moral Governor: God stood to them in a distinct relationship from that in which he stood to the rest of mankind. He was their own immediate Ruler and Protector, the King of their nation, the Author of the laws which bound them as individuals, and of the civil polity which united them together as a community. And hence the Jew, even apart from all considerations of a future

state, was entitled to look, even in this life, for a providential sanction to his conduct, when his ways were such as pleased the Lord. There is no question, then, that the Jew, taking the book of Proverbs as the guide of life, would find its truths realized to him in their literal and most obvious sense in this present world. In this present life he would find the blessing in obedience: he would find, looking no further than the present scene of things, that "as righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own hurt." If cases of an opposite character occur, they would be the exception, not the rule; and exceptions also of such a character as might be reconciled with the overruling government of God.

In the establishment of such a government, we might doubtless perceive one great end of God's separating a people, as he did the Jews, from the rest of the world, and placing them under peculiar laws of his own enactment, taking the rule of them into his own immediate hand. He here in his dealings with the Jews, held up before the world a specimen of his righteous government. In his dealings with that people, he affords an emblem, a visible emblem, of his dealings with others. In the midst of all the inequalities which sin has introduced, faith might indeed rest upon the word, that, "verily there is a God that judgeth the earth," and that ultimately righteousness will prosper, and wickedness will be punished: but, by selecting a nation in whose history this government is exemplified; a nation in the conduct of which God held up a visible picture, as it were, of his own dealings, he has made this truth manifest to the very senses of man; he has afforded, as in a figure, a faithful record of his dealings with the children of men.

Now one grand and leading feature of distinction between the Jewish and Christian dispensations is this, that the one was addressed to the sense, the other is addressed to faith; the one dealing with visible things, the other dealing with invisible things. Not indeed, as we are well assured, that the substance of these spiritual things (if we may use the term) could be received under the Old Testament dispensation in any other way than by faith; but then there were sensible objects all the way through, through which faith was to act; the sacrifices, for instance, of bulls and goats—the temple made with hands—and all the burdensome ritual of the Jewish ceremonial. It was consistent, then, with the general character of the dispensation, that the sanction of God's moral government should be manifested to the senses, and also that God should shew, after a visible manner, his approbation of good, and his hatred of evil. But, as we have observed, it is the essential character of the Christian dispensation, that it has to do, not with the things which are visible, but with the things which are invisible: "We look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and are eternal." Our calling is expressly to walk by faith, and not by sight: and hence it is but consistent with this distinction, that while God's providential government over his people is not less real under the Christian dispensation, that yet it should be less manifest: and those things which would be perplexing to us if we attempt to judge of God's ways by sense, become reconcileable with his character and with his promises when regarded in the judgment of faith.

I have entered more at length into this preliminary matter, because, perhaps, a plausible objection might be raised against the truth asserted in the text, and

in many similar texts in the Scriptures, as contradicted by absolute matter of fact. The words before us, translated out of their figurative language, obviously assert, that he who liberally dispenses to others of those bounties, whether in grace or in providence, which God has conferred upon him, shall be himself more abundantly enriched; that he who labours to refresh others with the streams of mercy, shall himself draw more largely and abundantly from the fountain itself. It must be admitted that, to the eye of sense, this assertion is far from being universally verified among us as matter of fact; in a worldly point of view it is not always the most virtuous who are the most prosperous, nor the most liberal who are the most successful. But are we, then, to conclude that God has given up the government of his own world, or to suppose that he has set aside the immutable sanctions of his own law? Surely if we say we will speak thus, we shall offend against the generation of God's children. It is ever to be borne in mind, that we are under a higher and more privileged dispensation than that of the Jews, and that it would be altogether an inversion of the plans of God's proceeding, to doubt the truth of the promises to them which have not their real, though it may be less ostensible, fulfilment in us. For as the Apostle tells us, "If we be Christ's, then are we"—surely in the highest sense—"then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We may here appeal to the words of our Lord to St. Thomas, which are descriptive of the superior blessedness of the dispensation in which we live: "Thomas, because thou hast seen thou hast believed; blessed"—that is, far more blessed—"are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." If the Jews were more manifestly and more sensibly under a perfect system of divine government, yet we may say that God has "provided some better thing for us;" and faith will see every promise fulfilled to us in a higher and better sense. It is really and universally, if it be not so manifestly, true, that "the liberal soul"—or as it is more literally rendered in the margin of our Bibles, "the soul that blesseth"—"shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

We must look for the highest exemplification of this passage, where indeed we must look for the highest exemplification of all Scripture—in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has left in all things an example, that we should follow his steps. He must be pre-eminently termed, "the liberal soul," or "the soul that blesseth;" who came to bless us; who, in order to invest us with glory, stripped himself of his own; who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

In contemplating the life and walk of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are apt to forget how entirely it was a life and walk of faith. We imagine, perhaps, that his essential deity placed him out of the boundaries of those principles and motives which are to actuate his people in their humbler course. We allow our minds, perhaps, to be influenced by such considerations as these: "As the Everlasting God, he had all things at command; therefore why should he pursue a long and thorny path in order to attain them? As the Everlasting God, he could see all things, past, present, and future, before him at one moment; how then can we attribute to him faith in things unseen?" Now, in order at once to convince us that there must be something altogether erroneous in this view, that it is altogether inconsistent with the language of Scripture, we are

expressly told that Jesus attained to his glory, not because he could *command* it, as he was *God*, but because he *won* it by a hard-fought battle as *man*: because "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," therefore "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." We are expressly told, that he obtained everlasting joy, not because his deity could command it, but because he suffered in order to obtain it: "For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

It is true there is a mystery in all this, which we never can fathom: the union of God and man in one person must always be so. But we must take care, that while we yield to the Lord Jesus Christ, in full, the attributes of Godhead, we do not deny him the perfections of manhood. We are to regard the Man Christ Jesus as the subject of all those motives which God addresses to any man and every man; we are to view him as actuated by all those principles which ought to actuate every man. And hence it is, that in him we may find the real and true, as well as the highest exemplification of the text: he spent his life in blessing; therefore it was he was so greatly blessed: it was as he watered others that he himself was watered of God. True it is that the result of all Christ's work was most certain; and the very constitution of his glorious person ensured to him the possession of all perfections: yet this certainty did not hinder the operation of those principles by which God has ordained that all perfection shall be attained by his creatures. True it is that ultimate success in the work of redemption was certain; yet this did not prevent that it could not be otherwise obtained than through the travail of death, and the shame and the dishonour of the cross. Even the joy of Jesus was purchased, as we may see, through the path of suffering: he suffered that he might reign. It is nothing derogatory, therefore, to the glory of the Lord, to say, that the words before us find their highest verification in him; that it was by his continually dispensing the riches which were treasured up in him, that the supply from his Father flowed so copiously upon him; that it was as he blessed others that he himself was blessed: that his human capacities were enlarged, and he himself, as to his nature, fitted for the glory with which he was to be invested by his work for God, and for the people of God. And so we find the Scriptures continually speaking of the Lord's work in this way. "Thou art fairer than the children of men," says the Psalmist: "grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And again, the prophet Isaiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears." In the same spirit, in the fiftieth chapter we read—"The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear,



and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." All these passages—which are but a specimen of what might be deduced in great numbers—go to shew that the Lord, acting in the economy of redemption, received grace from the Father; and that as he watered others, he himself also was watered of God. Herein then, as in all other things, he has "left us an example that we should follow his steps."

And here I should observe, in the first place, that it is not only lawful for the Christian believer to have respect to the recompense of the reward, but that *this is a motive sanctioned by the highest example*—by the example of Christ himself; and therefore one by which every believer ought to be influenced. It may be feared, that the doctrines of grace have been too often exhibited in such a light, as to weaken, if not to destroy, the motives which are drawn from this source; and no doubt much injury to practical godliness has ensued therefrom.

It has been thought by many to savour too much of legality, to hold out a future recompense as a stimulus to the active employment of all our talents in the service of God. Yet surely this is to confound things which are perfectly distinct in themselves. If it be inquired, indeed, on what ground the plea of acceptance with God is to be urged, and through what channel we may look for the divine favour to be extended to us; the reply is—In and through Christ only, who is "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and he that believeth in Christ is at once "justified from all things," and there is no condemnation to him. But is it at all inconsistent with this to say, that when introduced into this state of acceptance, every work done for the honour of God, and for the good of man, shall meet with a sure recompense; so that even a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall by no means lose its reward? Is it inconsistent with the doctrines of grace to propose a proportionable increase of future joy as a motive to present sacrifice; and to hold it up before Christians as a matter of certainty, that every sacrifice which they make for the Lord's sake shall be repaid from the hand of the Lord? Assuredly this is not unscriptural; or he who is the Author and Fountain of that grace would never have said. "There is no man that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or child, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come, life everlasting."

It is quite scriptural, therefore, to hold out this anticipation to the Christian believer, in order to stimulate him to make sacrifices for the good of others. Yes, beloved brethren, there is a book of remembrance before God, in which every such act is recorded: there is a memorial kept before the Lord, and he is not unrighteous to forget the labour that proceedeth from love. Every act of Christian love, every act of self-denying labour, every effort to alleviate the wants of our fellow-men, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked, to instruct the ignorant, to lead the perishing sinner to the cross of Christ, that he may have life eternal—every such act shall receive a gracious recompense from the Lord; and "he that watereth others shall be watered also himself."

But, while this is unquestionably true, and a lawful motive to hold up before Christians, the text would seem to refer, I think, rather to a present than to a future recompense: and in this respect it does unquestionably hold good. For,

first—to take the lowest view of the subject—we may say, that the liberal distribution of our worldly substance, according as God has blessed us, is attended with a blessing from the Lord. We cannot indeed assert, that the most liberal ensure to themselves the greatest worldly wealth; we cannot assert, that the treasures which are emptied in the cause of charity are sure to be replenished with a return in kind. But, if we look at the only real value which wealth possesses, we shall see that it is true, in the most literal sense, that the liberal soul alone is blessed in the enjoyment of what God has given him. If even we put aside the testimony of Scripture respecting this matter, and if we take no more than a philosophical or reasonable view of the matter, we must see that the real value of worldly substance cannot be in the amount of the lucre, but in the amount of enjoyment which it can impart. And shall it not be admitted, that the benevolent man who dispenses God's bounty to the poor and afflicted with a liberal hand, has far more enjoyment in what he possesses than he who shuts up the bowels of his compassion? Can it be doubted, that he who can reflect on this, that he has the prayers of the fatherless and of the widow, is far more blessed than he who can only contemplate his accumulated stores? Surely, in this point of view, then, which we admit to be a very low one, the text is still verified. It is the soul that blesseth that is made fat; and he that watereth that is watered himself. Such an one has found out the secret how to turn his worldly substance to the best account: he has found out how to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; how to make it most contribute to his real enjoyment: while he verifies in his own experience that divine aphorism which the Lord left us, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

But the text admits, or rather suggests, a still wider application. It would seem that it is but the exposition of an established law in the universal government of God's providence. God has ordained that our progress in divine knowledge and grace, and our progress in all the enjoyment of his gifts, either spiritual or temporal, shall be in proportion to our own readiness to communicate of the stores which he has already conferred upon us. Here the words which stand in immediate connexion with the text are strikingly verified. “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” We perhaps might have imagined, that growth in grace would be in proportion as a man could shut himself up in his own retirement, and give himself to the study of the Divine Word and of his own heart: we might be disposed to look for the greatest results from such an undivided attention to his own spiritual concerns. But here the conclusion altogether militates against actual experience. This shews that the Christian's rule of spiritual advancement is not so much in proportion to the acquisitions which he makes of knowledge, as to the use that he makes of it. It is far indeed from my intention to speak in disparagement of Christian retirement, and of those duties which the Christian can only pursue in secret: the times and the state of the Church, rather call for a zealous enforcement of the necessity of the duties of the closet. Without study, without reflection, without prayer, a man will in fact have nothing to dispense to others: he will be as an empty vessel, altogether as profitless to others as to himself: unless his own soul is watered with prayer and meditation, he will be little able to water others. It was the complaint of the spouse of old—“They

made me keeper of the vineyard ; but mine own vineyard have I not kept :” a conclusion which, it may be feared, is abundantly verified in the times in which we live. But I do mean this, that selfishness in religion, as in all other things, defeats its own end ; that it is our freely dispensing God’s grace, that will fit us for the reception of more grace ; that the very effort to communicate to others, brings the blessing to our own souls : in watering others, we ourselves also are watered. Look for instance at St. Paul : can you think that his spiritual attainments would have been equally great, if, instead of actively fulfilling the calling of his great apostleship, he had lived the life of a recluse ? Would he then, humanly speaking, have attained that large and capacious heart, that unbounded love, that deep sympathy with other’s miseries, that zeal, that devotedness to his Master’s will and work, that holiness which characterized him as a Christian man ? And it is the same certainly with every Christian in his measure. Attainment in the Christian life is not to be made merely by a correct theory of religion : it is not by merely hearing the truth ; no, nor even by the closest study of the truth : but it is by the liberally dispensing what we have received ; by following the apostolic direction—“ As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to the other ; as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” We are never to forget, that whatever we have is not our own, but God’s.

It is thus, as we feed others, that our own souls will be fed of God. It is in the nature of things, or rather I should say, it is in the appointment of God, that it should be so. Ask those who can speak from experience : they will tell you how much they have learned themselves in the endeavour to impart instruction to others : they will tell you what unknown sources of consolation have been opened to their own souls, while they have sought to fill others with comfort ; how truths, the importance and bearing of which were scarcely seen before, have broke in upon their souls with new light, while they have laboured to apply them to the wants and necessities of their fellow men : they will tell you how the glory and perfections of the Saviour have been more distinctly brought to view, while they have striven to make others acquainted with them. My brethren, be assured of this, that Christian duties and privileges cannot be performed or enjoyed by deputy. It has been one of the abuses of the numerous societies to which modern times have given birth, to favour such an attempt : as if the throwing of a few pounds into the public treasury of a visiting society, were a substitute for that which constitutes one part of pure and undefiled religion before God—to “ visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.” Such societies are excellent as affording a better opportunity for the combined efforts of individuals ; but they must not be made a substitute for individual effort. They must not be made, as we fear they have been, a refuge for

“The sluggard, with his pitying voice,  
Who sighs for wretchedness, yet shuns the wretch ;  
Nursing in some delicious solitude,  
His slothful life and dainty appetites.”

It is not merely, brethren, others’ advantage which you must look to, but your own also. It is not enough that you should lend your distant aid in order that others may be relieved, and comforted, and instructed ; but you must yourselves be brought into contact with wretchedness, and ignorance, and misery, for the

sake of your own souls; it is on this that your souls will be nourished and fed of the Lord; and it is this which stamps an additional importance on the individual performance of almost all Christian duties. Are you the father of a family? Then in your family worship (and surely that can scarcely be deemed a Christian family where the Christian altar is not raised), while you employ your efforts to instruct and to lead the devotions of others, you will yourself receive a blessing. Are you a parent? Some good will follow your labours in the spiritual instruction and teaching of your children. And, whatever be your calling, your visits to the house of affliction, your endeavours to relieve your fellow men, shall return in ten-fold blessings on your own souls: and think not that any station or calling exempts you from such—duties, shall I say?—or rather privileges. Remember, I implore you again, that it is one of the essential parts of our religion, to “visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction.” Remember, therefore, that if you be a Christian, not the most exalted station, nor the most active life, can exempt you from such duties. There is no honour so great as to be like your Saviour; and He that was Sovereign of all, and though he had the cares of the world resting upon him, found his delight among the destitute and the afflicted of men. And, however valuable your time, however greatly occupied you may be, you shall not find those moments lost, which, snatched from the most pressing engagements, are spent in the abodes of ignorance and of misery. You shall surely find it a truth in your own experience, that “the soul that blesseth shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”



## THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL.

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REV. T. ADKINS,

LADY HUNTINGDON'S CHAPEL, BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 23, 1834\*.

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“The glorious Gospel of the blessed God.”—1 TIMOTHY, i. 11.

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MAN is an ambitious being: the desire of attaining to some species of real or imaginary excellence is intimately interwoven with the very texture of the human mind. This desire commences with the earliest dawn of our conscious existence—as soon as we are capable of forming an opinion respecting our actions and our possible circumstances: and it remains with us through every subsequent stage of our life; stimulating us to future attainments, and holding out the prospect of greater good.

But the entrance of sin has beclouded our faculty of spiritual perception, and vitiated our moral taste: and hence many seek happiness in that which is not in itself essentially “glorious;” but which only tends to augment the suffering, and to increase the misery of the heart. There are individuals who possess such a perspicacity of pride as to discover in themselves excellences imperceptible to any eye but their own. There are those who are so disposed to attain to elevation, that they are content to occupy a position, even though it be as a dunghill, if they can but secure the attention of their fellow men. There are others who, having no virtues to plume themselves with, boast of their very vices, and glory in their shame.

My brethren, I have this evening to put before you an object, not of imaginary, but of real glory; an object, the transcendent splendour of which surpasses all that human ambition ever panted after, or human success ever won. All the productions of nature, and all the events of time—all that has been achieved by the ingenuity of man, or the majesty of God himself, is veiled before its transcendent splendour: and in reference to them we may say, what the Apostle said in reference to the comparative splendour of the two dispensations—that the former had no glory “by reason of the glory that excelleth.” O that this evening each of us may purge our abused vision at the fountain of heavenly radiance, that we may be blessed with spiritual perception to behold the unequalled splendour of that, respecting which it is declared, by the voice of infallible truth, that it is “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.”

The expression rendered, “blessed,” might, with no less propriety, have been translated “the happy Gospel.” And this suggests to us an important train of thought. All holy beings are happy; and all happy beings are benevolent—they are happy just in proportion as they are holy; and they are benevolent just in proportion as they are happy. Angels are holier than men, and

\* For the Bristol Auxiliary Missionary Society.

therefore they are more happy, and more benevolent. Unallied to us by the ordinary sympathies of a common nature, they yet take an intense interest in all that relates to the well-being of man. God is the holiest being, and therefore he is the happiest; and, being the happy God, he is the most benevolent being in the universe; and his own happiness is augmented whilst he is diffusing felicity through countless myriads of intelligent beings.

By "the Gospel," I understand that revelation of mercy in which the Deity, through the substitution and sacrifice of his Son, condescends to bestow blessings on a lost and ruined world. It is *the Gospel*, because it is *glad tidings*; glad tidings, inasmuch as it is a scheme through which the Deity bestows the greatest blessings on man—bestows them in a manner correspondent with the perfections of his own nature, and in a manner adapted to the moral impotence of our own.

Instead, however, of occupying your time with any prefatory remarks respecting the nature and constitution of this Gospel, I proceed to seize on the distinguishing feature which the Apostle places before us, and remind you that it is "the *glorious gospel*:" and it is so BECAUSE IT IS A SYSTEM OF ETERNAL TRUTH, IN WHICH THE MORAL PERFECTIONS OF THE GODHEAD ARE MOST TRANSCENDENTLY DISPLAYED. There is but one being in the universe that is self-existent and independent, and who, consequently, can make his own glory the ultimate object of his existence: and that being is God. Consequent obligation is the condition on which man receives his existence: "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live to the Lord; and whether we die, we die to the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." The sun shines, not for his own glory, but for the glory of Him who has placed him as a lamp in the firmament of heaven, and for the benefit of those minor orbs that roll around in infinite space. Some men are suns, and others are only stars; but all are compelled to shine—to shine, not for their own glory, but for the glory of Him who has fixed them in their appointed spheres. And there is a propriety in all this. If a finite creature were to seek his own glory, he would make an attempt to vault into the very throne, and invade the very prerogative of heaven; he would aim at that which does not belong to the creature, because *his* glory cannot be the greatest good. But for the Deity to aim at this object, and to achieve it, is for him to achieve the greatest good: and, at the very moment that this is enhanced to its highest splendour, it becomes the medium through which, in a proportionate degree, the happiness of the moral universe is enhanced.

Now, in reference to this "glorious Gospel," we say, that *in it all the perfections of the Divine nature are strikingly displayed*. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." The dread magnificence of the stars—the beauty of the varying seasons—the living millions that swim in the sea, that float in the air, that graze in the field, or, in endless combination of colour and form, people the regions of infinite space—speak of a present and a presiding God. But, brethren, where is the record of pardon? Where is the proof of forgiving mercy? It is neither written by the sun-beam, nor wafted by the breeze. The sea says, "It is not in me:" all nature says, "It is not in me." "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find

out the Almighty unto perfection?" These are past man's understanding: how small a portion is known to him! But when we turn to this "glorious Gospel," we see the Deity full robed, in his round of rays complete. In it we see exemplified what is profound in wisdom, inflexible in justice, awful in dignity, and touching in compassion, in their individual excellence, and in their harmonious combination.

But in this "glorious Gospel" there is, besides the exhibition of all the perfections of the Godhead, *the most striking development of them*. For though all the attributes of the Godhead are infinite, yet their manifestation may be varied in an endless diversity of degrees and forms: but in this "glorious Gospel" there is the most striking display of the whole. Let us look at these perfections of the Divine nature as philosophers do at a ray of light, through the medium of a prism: let us resolve them into their original elements (if I may be allowed the expression), and bring them to this test: and we shall point them towards this "glorious Gospel:" there is the most striking display of all the attributes of Jehovah.

Is *love* an attribute of the Divine nature? God is love: he is benevolence itself; it dwells in him as its proper seat; it springs from him as its proper source; and ever actuates him as a vital and immortal principle. We see it in the fragrance that regales our senses, and in the beauty that charms our eye: as Paley has delightfully said, "Pain is the exception—happiness is the rule:" and in all the varied forms of happiness in which the countless myriads of God's creatures that people this lower world do possess and exhibit it, we see so many indications of the truth of the maxim that "God is love."

But this is only as a taper to the sun, compared with the exhibition of eternal love in the cross of the Son of God. That such a sacrifice should be offered—O, this comes home to our souls with melting and with mighty persuasion. It is not merely that "we have redemption," but, "we have redemption *through his blood*." It is not merely that we have eternal life, but that that life cost the Son of God his own. And whether we consider the magnitude of the blessings that we receive, or the price at which they were purchased, it is such a display of divine love as we shall be occupied through the countless ages of eternity in endeavouring to comprehend. Hence it has been beautifully said that it is "the noon-tide of meridian compassion;" it is "the everlasting display of everlasting love." And hence the Apostle of the Gentiles, when he would give us an exhibition of the love of God, does not take us to some lofty mountain, and there spread before us, in beautiful perspective, all the majestic attractions of nature; but he takes us to the foot of Calvary, and, pointing us to the Illustrious Sufferer, he says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

Is *justice* an attribute of Divine nature? Where do we see it displayed so effectually as in "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God?" Justice is that attribute of his nature by which he is made to assign to every intelligent and accountable being that which is his due. He has evinced his righteous displeasure against sin in a thousand striking forms. I see it engraven on the arms that are washed on the shores of the Red Sea: I see it in those cities of the Plain that are the blighted and blasted monuments of the eternal ire of God: I see it in that abode where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;"

where prayer is unavailing, where repentance is ineffectual, where mercy is unknown.

But in each, in *all* of these, I have not so awful an exhibition of the inflexible justice of God, as when I go to the affecting scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary. There He hangs, rent with wounds, and racked with pain; his bones dislocated, his nerves convulsed. A gushing crimson tide flows from his bleeding heart: it trickles down his sacred body; it stains with purple the very ground on which his cross stands. It is noon; and yet it is awfully dark. "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And why is all this? O, brethren, it is justice sheathing its sword in the heart of mercy: It is Jehovah's Son bearing a weight of woe which none but Omnipotence could inflict, and none but Omnipotence could bear. And if I wish for a display, either of the justice of Jehovah, or the moral turpitude of sin, I must view it in the cross of Christ.

Is *wisdom* an attribute of the Divine nature? Where have we such a display of it as in "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God?" Wisdom consists in selecting the most suitable objects, and in adopting the most efficient means for the attainment of those objects. Now, in this Gospel, the Deity has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. I can very well conceive of holy and happy beings conferring kindness on holy and happy beings in return: but it is left to the wisdom of the cross to exhibit the medium in which a being of unsullied holiness can, compatibly with the claims of justice, pardon the guilty and save the lost. I can very well conceive how mercy can pardon the offender, or how justice can punish his sin: but it is left to the mysterious development of Calvary to unfold the method by which, while the Eternal Legislator maintains, unimpaired, the equity of his moral government, he adopts into his family, and bestows all the marks of love upon, that very offender who has trampled on his authority, and hurled defiance at his throne. Here, then, we have the most vivid display of all the perfections of Godhead.

We must, however, advance a step further: here is *the most harmonious exhibition of the perfections of the Godhead*. It is necessary for the divine glory, that all the attributes of the Godhead should be illustrated in harmony with each other, and that the scheme of mercy itself should be constructed on the principles of immutable justice. Supposing that there exists a law; that that law has been violated; and that the Divine Legislator determines to pardon the offender: it is obvious to a demonstration that he can only do this, compatibly with the claims of justice, through the medium of substitution and of atonement, and putting the offender under a course of moral discipline. Were Jehovah to bestow the blessing of eternal life through any medium which allowed his holiness to be sullied, or his veracity to be impeached, such an exhibition would not be *the Gospel*; because the interests of a part—and that, peradventure, a very small part of the intelligent universe, and that even a guilty part—would be advanced at the expense of the whole: for the various orders of intelligent beings might, from that very moment, imagine that they could, with impunity, trample on his authority, and hurl defiance at his throne. Such an act of indiscriminate lenity, therefore, would not be *the Gospel*, but a mere substitute for it, unworthy the character of the Deity, and unadapted to the moral necessities of the universe.



There is, then, the great problem to be solved—How can God be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly? How can sin be pardoned, and yet punished? How can the law be maintained in its authority, and the violater of that law be rescued from unrepealable and eternal death? From the depth of the Everlasting Mind there arose that scheme by which all these important ends were attained. The Everlasting Son of the Everlasting Father stooped from his throne in the heavens, and he became the weeping babe in the manger of Bethlehem, the weary traveller in the journey of life, the agonizing sufferer in the garden of Gethsemane, the spotless victim on the accursed tree. And when, by the mysterious oblation on the cross, once offered, he had harmonized all the attributes of the Godhead in one triumphant act of mercy, he opened a medium by which—compatibly with the claims of eternal justice, that looked so high and made so rigid a demand—he could pour the blessings of eternal salvation on the very vilest of the vile. Brethren, this is the moral glory of the Gospel; and this is the glory of ministers, that they have to preach it. Let the wise man glory in his wisdom; let the rich man glory in his riches; let the strong man glory in his strength: God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is this a useless speculation. it is as important as it is true. For the moral character of the Deity is at the foundation of all virtue. If that were to be sullied, virtue would have no foundation, hell would have no terror, obedience would have no authority and no rule. If you could shake the character of the Deity, you would shake his very throne, and unhinge the moral harmony of the universe itself. Therefore it is of the highest importance, not only to the happiness of creatures in this inferior world, but to intelligences that occupy the illimitable regions of the universal government; it is essential to each and to all, that there be a correct exhibition of the character of God. And not only so, but it bears a most beneficial aspect upon the moral happiness of beings like ourselves. For if you and I were to cherish expectations of future happiness that were not to be built on the foundation of the divine glory, and to be cherished only in proportion as that glory was tarnished, then our hope must terminate in despair. But, when a scheme is resolved upon, is brought before us, is explained to us, in which, at the very moment that Jehovah pardons the guilty and saves the lost, he does, at that time and through that medium, only add an additional ray to his own ineffable grandeur and glory, then despondency itself may hope, and the most forlorn of the human race may cherish a well-founded hope of everlasting salvation.

But I must advance to the second part of the discourse, and remind you that this is “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,” BECAUSE IT IS ADMIRABLY ADAPTED TO THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES OF MAN. Those necessities are vast and varied; but there is no want that it cannot supply, no guilt that it cannot pardon, no depth of misery which it cannot explore.

View man under all the phases of his existence, and you will find there is the fullest adaptation in this Gospel to each and to all. Man is an ignorant being; ignorance is the offspring of guilt; and when man became a sinner, his mental vision was beclouded. As sin diffused itself, ignorance followed as its attendant, till it thickened on the nations into a darkness that might be felt. In

reference to all that was of the highest importance, the world was in a state of grovelling ignorance: conjecture instead of certainty, probability instead of proof, were all to which they could attain. Their poets, it is true, sung of Tartarian gulfs and Elysian fields; but these were only considered poetic flights of the fancy, while the realities concealed beneath them were not generally believed. All the light that was possessed by the world prior to the disclosure of the Gospel was that which was confined to the small nation of the Jews; and this, compared with the light which was thereafter to be revealed, was as the first ray of the morning struggling with the retiring obscurity of the night. But when the star arose at Bethany, to dispel the darkness of the long evening, and poured its radiance on the path of life, Jesus explained what was ambiguous, he established what was doubtful; he elucidated what was obscure; and he shed an unearthly light on that all-important question—"How can man be just with God? How can man be pure with his Maker?"

But when we say that this Gospel is adapted to man as *an ignorant being*, I would remind you that it is so, not merely as adapted to convey to him the truth he should understand, but, by a light directed to the understanding and to the heart, first to instruct the judgment, and then to renovate the soul. There is all the difference in the world between mere intellectual and spiritual light; between that knowledge that may be obtained by the unaided efforts of the human mind, and that which is to be acquired by the teaching of the Spirit of God. The one is as different from the other as the mere picture of a country as it is painted on a map is from the country itself, where, with its hills and dales, and rivers, it stretches itself before your view. A man may have some faint conception that honey is sweet, or music harmonious; but the individual who has not the power of tasting and hearing can have no conception of the sweetness of the one, or the melody of the other. Now, there is a species of spiritual perception with which the soul must be invested ere it is capable of seeing the excellences of eternal truth. And here the Gospel comes to our aid, to dispel from our minds the darkness of ignorance, and the delusions of error. It carries the light of eternal truth down to every compartment of the inner man: and that God who, in the beginning of time, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our minds to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is adapted likewise to man as *a guilty being*. That he is guilty I need not pause to prove. Our violation of the divine law, our abuse of the divine goodness, our forgetfulness of the divine authority, all combine to fasten on our minds the appalling conviction that, as by nature we are the children of wrath, so by practice we are the children of disobedience. Tremendous thought! to be exposed to the displeasure of that Being, compared with which the concentrated indignation of all the beings in the universe would be only as the displeasure of a child. And yet this is the awful moral predicament in which every sinner is found. He is exposed to the lightning of that eye, he is exposed to the grasp of that omnipotent arm; and, if he die as he lives, he sinks into a state where the mercy of God is clean gone for ever, and he will be favourable no more.

Some of you are called upon this evening to pity the condition of *the heathen*. I would rather, for a moment, call upon you to pity *yourselves*. But per-

adventure, you ask, "How will sin be pardoned? Why, will repentance avail nothing?" And what can you do by repentance? Can you recall the past, and thereby avert the future? Can you do more by repentance than acquit yourself of present obligation? Can you produce a surplus of merit that shall be employed for the reduction of your past deficiencies? Must the pardon of the philosophy which was too proud to submit to the humiliating doctrines of the cross, be based on the exploded notion of supererogation? If we are left in doubt on this subject, how sin can be pardoned, and God yet glorified, the Gospel comes in to our aid. It is the precious blood of Jesus which can alone avail. He is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And when the sinner comes and places the burden of his weakness and his woe on his precious blood and prevailing intercession, in that very act, whatever may have been his anterior crimes, he passes from death unto life—from a state of condemnation to a state of acceptance—from the dark, dreary dominion of nature, into the light and loveliness of the kingdom of God: and those perfections of the Godhead which before had lowered upon him with frowns of severity, now relax into smiles of love; and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

This Gospel is still further adapted to man as a *polluted being*. And we bring the broad and sweeping charge against human nature as a whole—that it is in this state of pollution. We acknowledge that there is a vast disparity as it relates to the exterior man. We know there may be the consistency of friendship, the ardour of patriotism, and the firmness of inflexible principle, even where the Gospel has not found its way: and individuals who admit this truth, bring it as a charge, that we have underrated the condition of mankind, and, therefore, the Gospel is not necessary for them. We admit that there are in the character of man some appearances more favourable than others: we admit there are some species of excellence to be found where the Gospel has not worked its way. But let us come to the point—On what are we to form our estimate of the moral character of man? Upon principle and motive. Upon that which we designate *principle* depends the moral virtue of every action, and the moral quality of every mind. Where this principle is wanting, there the character is reduced to one mass of moral depravity: where this principle exists, there is, undoubtedly, a substratum of moral excellence. And when we proceed to the examination, we shall find, that though there may be amiable dispositions, generous feelings, and firm friendships, there is a total destitution of moral principle, in the scriptural sense of the word; for that principle is, supreme love to God, evincing itself in all its appropriate forms. Bring forth, therefore, the most flattering specimens of human nature that your imagination can paint, or your experience can produce, whether in Christian or heathen lands; if the love of God has not actuated it, if the fear of God has not restrained it, if a disregard to the Divine authority has not influenced it, then, notwithstanding the attractions with which the man is invested, we are compelled to reduce him to his own naked deformity, and to say, he is "a child of wrath even as others." Weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, he is found wanting: measured by the rule of right and wrong, he comes short of what regeneration and pardon imply: and the decisions of the last day will award

the unhappy outcast, his destiny amongst those who have lived without repentance, and died without hope.

And is this the condition of man, as man, under all the varied forms of his existence? And has the sin-sick angel of death breathed on the vast family of man? And are they all spiritually dead? It is true. And how are they to be made alive again? The past history of the world is only a mournful record of the triumphs of sin, over every barrier that civilization or philosophy has interposed. But "the glorious Gospel" comes in to our aid; and, at the very moment that it reveals to us an all-efficacious atonement through faith, by which sin may be pardoned, it exhibits a benign Agent who can enlighten what is dark, and cleanse what is impure, and elevate what is earthly, and carry the very light of heaven into the inert mass of this world's corruption. And this benign Agent will communicate himself to the most unworthy suppliant that implores its aid, not only with the sovereignty of a prince, but with the generosity of a friend. So that no man is doomed to live the slave of sin contrary to his will. Wherever he is, this Gospel comes to his aid. Living under a dispensation of mercy, however reduced he may be by the recklessness of his evil propensities, the Gospel meets him on the very ground to which he is reduced, raises his prostrate spirit, and impresses upon it the long-lost lineaments of heaven.

It is "the glorious Gospel" because it is adapted to man, as a *miserable being*. Misery and guilt are linked to each other in an unbroken chain; and no man can be the voluntary slave of sin, without, in a proportionate degree, being the victim of wretchedness. To prove this, I need not exhibit to you the many-coloured woes which obtain in this lower world; I need not point out to you the pestilence impregnating the air with poison, and war drenching its sword in blood; I need not take you down to those haunts where the victims of want retire to die: I will take you where some of you may be reluctant to go; I will take you into the interior of an unpardoned sinner's heart, and there you will find misery personified before your view. He has a conscience—a conscience that appears to slumber—and he may even imagine that it is dead. But it is active all the while: with minute attention it notices every action of his life; it chronicles every thought, and waits only the favourable moment to read the black catalogue aloud, to the confusion of the sinner and the astonishment of the world. Awakening, by some unexpected incident in the history of his life, his conscience, is like rousing the hungry lion in his lair: no power can resist its force, no attempts can mitigate its rage. O, the horrors of an accusing conscience! There are some evils which you may escape by going into company; there are others which you may avoid by going into solitude: but the guilty wretch passes into company, and his guilty conscience dashes the untasted cup of pleasure from his trembling lips: he goes into solitude, and, as a spirit, it passes before him, and "the hair of his flesh stands up." O man, whoever thou art, whose conscience is unappeased by the blood of sprinkling, peace of mind thou canst not enjoy:

"The dreadful syllables—death, hell, and sin—  
Tho' whispered, plainly tell what works within;  
That conscience there performs its faithful part,  
And writes a doomsday sentence on your heart."



And how is this conscience to be appeased? Will philosophy avail? Will scepticism avail? Will pleasure avail? Miserable comforters are they all: a guilty conscience, like the barbed arrow in the panting sides of the wounded deer, adheres to him wherever he goes, and every attempt to eradicate the fatal shaft only lacerates the wound the more. Am I addressing such a being this evening; and do you ask, with anxious palpitating breast, "How shall I escape the wrath to come?" O, I rejoice that I stand before you with "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." That very atonement that satisfied the claims of justice, will satisfy the claims of conscience: that very blood that expiated the guilt of sin, will allay the throbbings of an anxious mind. Here is the balm, the vital and all-healing balm, that alone can reach the emergency of your case: all else is but moral empyricism, that mocks the misery it proposes to alleviate, and deepens the wound it proposes to heal. Come to the Cross; come, and by faith apply the precious blood of sprinkling, and you will have peace within and peace above, "a tranquil conscience, and a smiling God;" a peace which, built on a firm foundation, and supported by principle, cannot be shaken by aught that time can develope, or eternity conceal; a peace, which, like the unruffled surface of the lake on a calm summer's evening, is not only tranquil, but reflects on its bosom the very tranquillity of the skies. O, could I but persuade you to come and allay the throbbings of your mind, by the application of this precious blood; then you would feel the truth of the declaration, that it is "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

This Gospel is adapted to man as *an immortal being*. That it he so, I need not now pause to prove; our sense of right and wrong, our insuppressible forebodings, the apparent disorders that obtain in the moral government of the universe, all combine to fasten on our minds the truth, that we shall be called to a final and definite account—"Apart from which consideration" (to use the language of the finest orator of his day) "our life is a shadow, our very existence itself is a riddle, and the mysterious events that obtain in the world around us, are as incoherent as the leaves which are scattered by the wind."

But what relief can be afforded to the inquiry—whether it be prompted by the moody spirit of unhallowed scepticism, or the trembling anxiety of unsatisfied conscience—Is this soul of mine immortal, or does it die with the body? Is this eye, before which the wide domain of nature lies spread in beautiful perspective, to be for ever quenched in darkness? Is this spirit, that seems like the master spirit of this lower world, that can penetrate the profoundest with the keenness of intuition, and embody the loftiest in the colours of a vivid imagination, to sink into gloom and annihilation, and to be notwithstanding all its mental appliances, as though it never had been? To lull these anxious inquiries—inquiries suggested by the loftiest mind that ever descended on this orb, and to which they found no satisfactory reply—we return an unhesitating answer: "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." There we learn that our soul is as immortal as the source from whence it came: that it may change the mode of its existence, but that its existence can never close; that it will pass through the valley of the shadow of death, but only to enter its magnificent residence, where it will find objects corresponding to its nature, and commensurate with its duration: and that which pours such a flood on

the eternal destination of man, and not only points out heaven, but bestows the boon, must be "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

It is so, in the last place, because it is adapted to man as *an impotent being*. For vast and important as are the blessings to which I have adverted, if they were bestowed on conditions with which we could not possibly comply, the exhibition would only serve to mock our misery and enhance our despair; we should only be in the predicament of the wretch of antiquity, who was suspended over a running stream, which, when he attempted to partake of it, rushed from him, and left him more wretched than before. The blessings to which I have adverted, are not more exalted in their nature than free in their disposal; they are without money and without price: and to be without money and without price is all that is required on your part and mine, in order to receive them as the express gift of heaven. When our first parents were expelled from Paradise, there was an angel with a flaming sword placed to guard the entrance to that Paradise, and to prevent their return. But here is no angel. I recall the expression—there *is* an angel; but instead of an angel of justice with its flaming sword, it is the angel of mercy; and a voice is heard on every passing breeze, exclaiming, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And do you wonder, brethren, that our feelings are kindled, when we state truths like these? It is an impious calumny; and, whatever might be our feelings, I should blush for myself if I could speak on such a subject, without a desire of speaking thoughts that breathe, and in words that burn, while I proclaim to guilty, rebellious, miserable, dying, immortal beings, "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

Thirdly, it is "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God," because **IT IS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE ULTIMATELY THE MOST IMPORTANT BLESSINGS TO THE WORLD AT LARGE.** The reign of sin and misery is not to exist eternally on this lower world; it is to be brought to a close. Standing on the mount of Scripture prophecy, and looking down the vale of time, we contemplate a scene such as earth saw never; such as angels stoop down to see. The language of beauty and blessedness is employed to depict, as with the colours of heaven, this unearthly scene. The effects of the Saviour's death will flow down the tide of eternity, will increase with the increasing gratitude of successive generations, and be prolonged, even after it has been hymned over the habitations of this lower world. But what is to produce this change? Will philosophy and civilization accomplish it? The experiment has been tried: for four thousand years philosophy had its reign; and it is a well-attested fact, that, at the time in which philosophy shone with its greatest splendour, in which philosophers themselves were men of the highest repute, and when it was the pride of kings and emperors to patronize them, and raise them to honour—at that very time men were sunk in the depth of moral degradation; sable night spread her canopy over this darkened world, under which the most detestable rites were perpetrated in rapid succession. A by-stander might say, "Philosophy, it is true, instructed their minds, and civilization reformed their manners;" but there is nothing that can stop the course of that infernal pit, the pestilence of which continually rises before our

view, and produces monstrous things. But the Gospel will come into our view, and achieve all that, in the praises of which poets sung and martyrs bled. O, what visions of glory—you who love the Saviour, and desire now to encircle his brow with mediatorial glory—what visions of glory rise before our view! In the prospect of those scenes we discover the truth: eternal truth, which has so long laboured through the darkness of an eclipse, shall shine forth in its own splendour; and men will acquire a knowledge of subjects, equally important in their nature, and imperishable in their duration. “Holiness”—consisting in the supreme love of God, and of conformity to his image—will be written on the very bridles of the horses, and mingle with the commerce of the nations. The heart of man—now a fountain from which all fetid streams are perpetually pouring forth—will then give birth to all that is holy in principle, and bland in disposition. The breath of heaven has originated more enlightened systems of civil government than any the world ever discovered. Then, indeed, philosophy shall refine the minds, and civilization reform the manners of mankind: but, above all, the Gospel, under its plastic influence, shall mould this world into such a scene of moral beauty, that the Deity shall again look on it with complacency, and pronounce that all is very good. The love of the Saviour shall warm every heart, and dwell on every tongue—*now* rising in solitary strains of gratitude, *now* combining in hymns of praise—till it shall roll through creation, and the very thunder of God awaken the universe to new and rapturous delight: the dwellers in the valleys and on the rocks shout to each other; the distant hills and mountain-tops catch the swelling joy, till nation after nation join in the choir, and earth rolls the rapturous song around. Brethren, these are scenes which we are warranted to contemplate, through the medium of the prophecies of the Gospel; and that which the prophecy announces, the truth shall achieve; and, under the influence of this “glorious Gospel,” this new and better order of things shall surely arise.

I must now come to the concluding part of the subject, TO DEDUCE SUCH REMARKS AS ITS NATURE WILL SUGGEST.

First of all—for I shall be very simple and obvious in the inferences I shall draw—I remind you both of *the privileges and the obligations with which you are invested who possess this Gospel*. May I not take up the language of benediction in this assembly this evening, and say, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” You are guilty, and you know the medium of pardon: you are unholy, and you know the medium of sanctification: you are miserable, and you know where to flee for comfort: there is no form of evil to which you are exposed, for which there is not a commensurate remedy in the “glorious Gospel:” and you are intrusted with privileges above millions. O, think of them. Your privileges and your obligations keep pace with each other; and to whom much is given, much will be required. What if this evening I were empowered to stand in the midst of the dense population of India or China—what would be the emotion of some broken-hearted wretch if he could have caught the sounds to which perhaps some of you have listened this evening with

unconcern! And what if, still further, I had been commissioned to traverse the hills, and valleys, and plains, of those lands, and pronounce to its wretched inhabitants the invitations of that Gospel to which you have listened: would they not rise from their abodes of wretchedness, and make the very vault of perdition to echo with the song of gratitude and praise? Remember that you possess that, this evening, for which the lost in hell would give millions of worlds. By this Gospel you will be saved: by this Gospel you will be condemned. "Hell," said a pious writer, "is truth seen too late." Be careful, I beseech you, half-hearted, undecided, impenitent, perishing hearers of the Gospel; lest you pluck yourselves, with a suicidal hand, by your own impenitence, from the elevation you now occupy; and sink, like Lucifer, never to rise again.

Secondly, we infer from this subject *how pitiable must be the condition of those inhabitants of the earth to whom this Gospel has never been sent!* Ignorance there has no guide, misery no asylum, despair no hope; society itself is only a scene of wretchedness, where we behold, in awful combination, all that is ferocious in aggression on the one side, and all that is ineffectual or timid in compliance on the other. But it is to man individually that the situation is most terrible. View that hoary savage. He sees about him the scenes of his youth; his hands are stained with blood; he sinks at once under an accumulated load of crimes and years. He would look to the grave for succour; but alas! all there is dark—the darkness of the shadow of death. See that poor inhabitant of Hindostan. He resorts to the most detestable orgies to allay the throbbings of a guilty conscience: he offers "the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul." And what can meet their case? They are wretched *here*, and eternity to them is only a dark and dreary scene, where they are mocked with the unreal illusions of a vain imagination, or appalled by the spectres of guilt and sin. What can meet their case? In this fearful condition they are passing on from what is temporal to what is eternal; and, as they vanish from our view, we seem to hear the shout of anguish, or the sullen groan of despair. What can meet their case? Why, brethren, you possess that which will meet their case, which will enlighten their darkness, comfort them in their sorrow, and pour the very radiance of heaven over the valley of the shadow of death.

Now, I would ask, while you behold millions of your fellow beings, allied to you by the common sympathies of nature, perishing in the situation to which I have adverted, and you possess that which will meet the urgency of their case—can you lie down on the bed of repose, and slumber unconcerned and unaffected by the piercing shrieks that arise from the agonized hearts of perishing millions? Remember that he who refuses to extend the key of knowledge to those who are in ignorance is, as Johnson has said, guilty of all the crimes that ignorance may produce; in the same way that he who extinguishes a light-house, would be guilty of the horrors of the shipwreck. You possess the means by which this Gospel may be extended. Institutions have arisen so vast as to embrace empires, and yet so minute as to receive the smallest contribution that may be poured into its treasury. We invite, then, young and old, master and servant, rich and poor, literate and illiterate—we invite you all to link every energy of your nature with the cause, and to devote yourselves, at once, with the firmness of a principle, and the ardour of a passion, to those big and busy enterprises which are designed to tell on the moral destiny of a lost and ruined world.



## THE DEATH OF CHRIST THE LIFE OF HIS PEOPLE.

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SCOTCH CHURCH, CROWN-COURT, COVENT GARDEN, NOVEMBER 11, 1834\*.

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"He saved others, himself he cannot save."—MATT. xxvii. 42.

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THERE can be no question that many of the Jews applied the words of the text, either to deride the pretensions of Jesus to the Messiahship of Israel, or to shew that his obvious inability to save himself demonstrated that, after all, his miraculous power was not a match for the resources of the Priests and the Scribes. It may also be admitted that many used the language of the text with emotions of the deepest surprise. We may conceive that some of those on whom he performed most marvellous cures, were standing around the cross, and were penetrated with the deepest amazement, that He who healed them could not heal himself—that He who raised others from the grave by a word, could not come down from the cross and rescue himself; and those that had been blind, in all probability, looked up and around, scarcely believing that Christ could have opened their eyes; and they that had been deaf, listened, not sure whether they heard or not; and they that had been halt and maimed, leaped and ran again, scarcely persuaded that vigour and strength had returned to their limbs. These men, the monuments of his mercy and power, felt themselves perfectly puzzled to determine how he could save others, and yet not save himself; how power, without limit, could go forth from him to thousands around him, and no portion of it alight on himself.

Thus while the words of the text were the language of derision and insult, as uttered by some, they were the language of wonder and inexplicable amazement as employed by others. All these erred because they knew not the Scriptures. Isaiah had proclaimed him, in one breath, to be the Everlasting God, the Prince of Peace, the Wonderful, the Counsellor; and, in the next, to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He had announced in the one page, that he would open the eyes of the blind, let the prisoner and the oppressed go free, preach the gospel to the poor; and yet declared in the next, that he should be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." In other words, the pens of the prophets had written, centuries before, that he should save others, and yet not save himself; and, widely as the Scribes and Pharisees that stood by the cross differed from Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel, in their meaning and intention, they, nevertheless, uttered the echo of their sentiments when they lifted up their voices and cried, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Thus, from the bitterest enemies of

\* Preached before the Rev. the Scottish Presbytery of London.

the cross and of Christ, a glorious truth was extorted—"He saved others." What the Jews applied to the Saviour in derision, we apply in praise and in honour, what they said with a sneer, we with joy and gratitude; what they uttered to proclaim him an impostor, we utter to proclaim him the promised Messiah, the everlasting God: and thus we wrest his triumphs from Satan, and demonstrate them the triumphs of Christ, and turn the discordant reproaches of hell into the holy and harmonious songs of heaven

First, observe **THE CONCESSION MADE BY THE BITTEREST ENEMIES OF THE LORD JESUS.** They had long tried, by falsehood and misrepresentation, to eclipse the glory of his marvellous works, and, under the semblance of piety, to affix on the Son of God the crimes and the guilt of a sinner: and now, for the first time, when they thought his merciful career was at its close, they admitted the truth—"He saved others"—which they had all along endeavoured to do away. They see at length the eyes of the blind drink in again the rays of day, by the Saviour's touch; and the ears of the deaf hear sounds of sweet concord, at the Saviour's command; and the halt and the maimed, at the magic of his look, leap as the hart and as the roe; and as his tears fall on the grave of Lazarus, and his voice echoes through its chambers, they see the dead come forth and appear again amid the ranks of living men. These were the imperishable proofs of his great salvation—these the trophies of his ability to save to the uttermost of human calamity and woe.

But we might go back to earlier eras, and bring from these the many proofs of the assertion—"He saved others." It was He that saved just Lot. It was He, the angel of Jehovah's presence, that saved his people from Egyptian darkness and thralldom, and led them through the wilderness with a high hand and an out-stretched arm. It was He that appeared to Daniel, greatly beloved, by the streams of Ulai, and gathered his people out of Babylon, and drew them with cords of a man, and with bands of love, and placed them in the midst of their own country. At whatever period of the world we look, we find it fulfilled, "He saved others." There was no disease which he did not cure, no form of death he did not quicken, and no amount of human guilt he did not save from. His name was indeed Jesus—he that should save Israel from their sins.

And now, brethren, we may come down the tide of time, and learn what illustration this clause derives from the character and destinies of those who have experienced its truth and its efficacy. We read of men rejoicing amid the pangs of martyrdom, and wafted to glory amid joys, which neither fire nor flood could extinguish. We hear of men rising superior to the severest ills of human life, wholly in virtue of the power of an unseen Saviour. We see and we know of men delivered from the fears of eternal death, and from the power and the ascendancy of besetting sin, and from the terrors which the justice and holiness of God are fitted to inspire, wholly through the salvation of the Son of God, and, in fact, that the physical deliverances wrought by Jesus on earth, are infinitely eclipsed by the spiritual deliverances wrought by Jesus in heaven. We find men conscious of a sight they never enjoyed before; and perceptions, and hopes, and prospects, to which they were formerly strangers. In short, He is able to save others to the uttermost of human guilt, to the uttermost of human life, to the uttermost of human time.

This position is proved by the assertions of that Book that lies not, and confirmed by daily instances that cannot be misapprehended.

Now the great question presses on our attention with all its force—how it comes to pass that He, who saved others, could not save himself; how He, who could tear from death his prey, and from the grave its tenantry, could not come down himself from the cross; how He, who could command, according to his own declaration, legions of angels strong, could not scatter and unnerve the desperate bands that nailed him to the cross. We say it seems most marvellous that He, who could pass through the doors and the walls within which his people were assembled, or blast the fig-tree by a syllable, or feed five thousand by a word, could not command the nails that they should not enter his flesh, and the cross that it should not bear him, and the hearts of the soldiers that they should not keep from fainting and failing in the murderous tragedy. It seems most marvellous that He, who could walk upon the crouching billows of the unruly deep, and beckon to the winds, and make them obey, and rescue men from the waters in their fury, could not yet arrest the machinery and the executioners of death. He had power, he said, to take up his life and to lay it down; yet hear you not his prayer—"Father, save me from this hour: but for this purpose came I into the world."

How, then, is the seeming wonder of the text to be explained? It was not for want of power; for he had all power in heaven and in earth. It was not through any deadness to a feeling of pain; for his sensibilities were keen as his sufferings were unparalleled. It was not from any ignorance of the issue; for he knew before, and predicted, the absolute certainty of his painful death. How then came it to pass, that he saved others, and yet himself he could not save? The answer and the explanation to the mystery will be found in the end which he came into the world to accomplish. He came "to seek and to save them that were lost:" and these he sought; and these he would save, should it be at the expenditure of life, and peace, and all that was dear: and if he found it decreed and written that, in saving others, himself he could not save, he was prepared and willing to suffer and to die. So that the "could not save himself" arose not from any physical inability, or any lack of strength or of wisdom.

First, IT AROSE FROM THE NATURE OF THE WORK WHICH HE HAD UNDERTAKEN. He determined to save others, though he had to bear the wrath of God, and to endure the curse, and to hang and die upon the cross. It was found that without shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sins—that the blood of bulls and of goats could not wash away sin; in short, that unless it was the blood of Jehovah's incarnate Son, in our nature, and in the likeness of our humanity, it could not take away sin: and hence, the Saviour, to save others, was pleased, and yet constrained, to sacrifice himself. O, there was that in sin which nothing but the blood of incarnate Deity could wash away; there was a chasm between the Creator and the fallen creature, which none but a suffering Saviour could render palpable. We see, then, that if the end for which the Saviour came into the world was to be accomplished, he could not save himself. If others were to be saved, Christ must die.

Secondly, THE EVERLASTING PURPOSE OF THE FATHER WAS ANOTHER

**REASON WHY HE COULD NOT SAVE HIMSELF.** The Father had proclaimed that in no other way could the sinner be saved than by a substitute bearing the sinner's punishment; so that, coming into the sinner's room and stead, he should find it fulfilled that, while he saved others, himself he could not save. The wrath that descended in torrents on the Substitute, should issue from him in streams of mercy and peace on the sinner; and the darkness that entered into the soul of the Substitute, should shine forth from him, in rays of light, into the heart of the converted sinner. It was, in short, decreed, that the Substitute should receive into his bosom all that was awful and infinite in the threats and curses of offended Deity; and having, by a chemistry altogether inscrutable, converted them into blessings, and promises, and hopes, should scatter them liberally on every land. Hence, whosoever undertook the dread functions of Mediator between the Living God and the sinner, must be prepared to submit to the condition of the text, that while he saved others, himself he could not save.

Thirdly, **THE SAVIOUR'S FREE UNDERTAKING OF THE OFFICE OF A PRIEST, AND VICTIM, AND REDEEMER**, brought him into the condition that while he saved others, himself he could not save. When God put the momentous question, "Who shall stand in the gap, and endure the punishment that sin deserves, and be a channel to the mercy which the sinner needs, and can obtain in no other way?" the Son of God replied, "Send me: lo, I come to do thy will, O God." The Lord Jesus having undertaken the glorious achievement, would not, through the pressure of tribulation, and anguish, and wrath, shrink back from the work which the Father had given him to do. He was not man that he should repent, nor the son of man that he should lie. He had pledged himself to go through the agonizing work of redemption; and though he should meet the legions of hell arrayed and in arms against him, and though he should meet the Jews, and the men of the world in general, opposed to his person and functions, and though he should find the wrath of God against sin, and the wrath of man against holiness, so fearful that he must be consumed in the midst of it, as a sacrifice—still he was determined to finish the work of redemption.

Fourthly, **THE GLORY AND HONOUR OF GOD MADE IT THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE, THAT WHILE HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE COULD NOT SAVE.** Had God admitted unsanctified sinners, without expiation, into his glorious presence, he would have made his mercy the grave of his holiness, and justice, and truth; he would have conveyed to men an impression of Deity inferior far to that which our own minds might conceive; he would have virtually sanctioned the inference which men would have generally made, that God approves of vice and of virtue without distinction, and extends his rewards to the one as well as to the other. We should thus have supposed that holiness and truth were but ideas invented in imaginative days, destitute of reality, and unentitled to veneration or pursuit. But in the sacrifice and death of the Son of God, we have the clearest evidence that the Almighty regards sin with the deepest abhorrence, and holiness with infinite love. We learn from the cross, that God's holiness is so great, that it cannot admit one of the family of Adam within the precincts of heaven till his sins are washed entirely away; and that the truth of God is so



unalterable that it cannot revoke its threatenings, or unfold the gates of glory, till all its curse had been endured, and all its words fulfilled.

Hence it came to pass that, while the Son of God saved others, himself he could not save. He clasped the sinner in his arms, and met the fiery wrath of the sinner's God, and passed him to heaven, while he himself perished in the midst of its flames. He wrapped the guilty in his bosom, and encountered the threats and the curses of the law, and carried him to bliss, while he himself was sacrificed in the furious struggle. Thus, while he saved others, himself he could not save, because it was his meat and his drink to do the will of his heavenly Father; because it was the overwhelming desire of his heart to glorify his God, and finish the work which he had given him to do. Sinners he could save, but sinners he would not save at the expense of his Father's glory: and therefore himself he could not save: he preferred the glory of God to his own life.

Fifthly, THE LOVE THAT HE BORE TO US IS ANOTHER REASON OF THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT. The great principle that impelled him forth on his errand of mercy and grace, was a principle of love to the children of men. He loved us altogether irrespective of any quality with which we were endued; and because he loved us with an everlasting love, he was prepared to save us, though in the mighty effort he should sacrifice himself. No love surely can exceed the love that led the Son of God to die, "the just for the unjust"—"though rich, for our sakes to become poor"—to become "a curse for us"—to present himself a sacrifice for our sins. O, it was not the everlasting covenant, with all its certainty and strength, nor the vindication of his Father's character, which might have been otherwise, and must have been ultimately, set forth in its integrity and glory—that urged the Son of God to brave the powers of hell and the principalities of earth—the hiding of his Father's face, and the eclipse of his own glory for a while, and the agonizing and accursed pains of the cross—these were mighty, and these were pressing; but the mainspring of his doings and sufferings, was love to perishing sinners: the cords that bound him to the cross, were cords of love taken from his own heart; and these held him so fast to the tree, that it was brought to pass that while he saved others, himself he could not save. The "could not" was the result of his love; the impossibility of saving himself, sprung from his infinite affection to you.

The Lord Jesus had but two alternatives—either to leave sinners to perish in their sins, and plunge into the abodes of the eternally lost, and himself abide in the glory and bliss which he had with the Father in heaven—or to rescue and raise sinners from their misery, and condemnation, and unhappy doom, to the joys of immortality, and himself to undergo the sinner's punishment, and exchange the mansions of heaven for the miseries of earth, and his crown for a cross, and the praises of cherubim and seraphim for the execrations of Israel. Behold the dread alternative! Sinners must *eternally* die, or the Son of God must *infinitely* suffer. Behold next the character of the respective parties: men enemies—yea, enmity—to God; men perfectly indifferent whether they should live or die; men destitute of all claim, and of all merit, and of every beautiful trait; men leavened with enmity to God, and lost in darkness, misery, and sin. Christ, on the other hand, sinned against and despised; Christ, the Holy God, defied and dishonoured, unworshipped, unpraised, unsought, and uncared for—not

to be made more happy though Adam's universal family were saved, and not to be made miserable though Adam's universal family were lost.

After you have now seen the position of the parties—man and his Maker—listen to the proposition that is proclaimed in the realms of glory. Are men to be saved while their Saviour cannot be saved? Are the enemies of God to be left to perish in their blood? Or is God to become man, and suffer, and be sacrificed, in their stead? O, momentous crisis in the annals of the universe! O, spirit-stirring moment! On the decision hung the eternal destinies of unborn millions. On the reply, hell or heaven was to rejoice, and sinners to suffer or be saved. What reply would reason have suggested? What response would justice have uttered? What decision would fallen man have come to, had it been between him and his enemy? Angels, and men, and justice, and truth, would have cried, "Let the guilty sons of men suffer; let not the Holy Son of God endure anything for their salvation." But O! "God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and God's ways are not our ways." While all creation stood at this crisis in amazement and suspense—while angels wondered if ever they might be able to rejoice over penitent sinners, and the earth wondered if her groans were to cease, and heaven wondered if songs of redemption were ever to be heard within its gates, a voice came from the throne of the Lamb, and from the midst of living streams, saying, "Send me. Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me." O, never did music like this steal upon the ear of the listening universe—never were sounds so spirit-stirring heard—never did a thrill of deeper rapture pass athwart creation, than at that hour and moment. Others saved, though God incarnate not saved! Enemies died for by Him against whom they had raised their arm! God satisfying for the dishonour which man had done to His law, and to His attributes: God bearing the punishment the guilty deserved. Wrath poured on Jesus, that mercy might be poured on the sinner! Death fastening on the Son of God, that life might be given to us! The grave receiving Him who never sinned, that glory might encircle us who had done nothing but sin! His groans are our songs of triumph and of joy—His tears, our unfading smiles—His agonies and pangs, our transport and our triumphs—His cry on the cross, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" the cause of our hope, "Thou wilt never leave us nor forsake us"—His wounded and bleeding heart, the fountain of our sanctification and peace.

First, Observe the intimate and inseparable connexion that subsists between the sacrifice of Jesus, and the salvation of his people. It is right that you should contemplate the glory of Christ, and rejoice in his approaching triumph, and admire the lofty morality of his doctrine, and the noble impress it can stamp on the hearts and habits of men. But with all this, and without depreciation of this, the great object on which our eyes should be riveted from our birth to our death, and from the cradle to the grave, is the sacrifice and the cross of Christ? It is with this cross that our salvation is essentially connected; it is with a crucified Christ that we have mainly to do: and until you look at the cross as the only channel of life, and behold the suffering Saviour as the source of your salvation—until you find the cross so interwoven with all your feelings, and hopes, and affections, that you can, with Paul, glory in the cross, and in it alone—you will never rise to the full participation of your privileges, nor to the full experience of

the power of the truth. O, it is only by the way of the cross, that we ever can ascend to the crown of immortality: it is only through the rent-vail, that is, the flesh of Jesus, that we can enter the Holy of holies: it is only by being united to a suffering Saviour, that we can hope to have eternal fellowship with a glorified Saviour. It is, in short, only by seeing and resting on Christ, not saved himself, that we and all others can be saved.

Secondly, Deduce from the text *the height, and the depth, and the length, and the breadth, of the love of Jesus*. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend," "but God commended his love to us, in that while yet sinners, Christ died for us." Behold a love that would not be repulsed by the opposition and the execrations of the men it came to embrace—that would not retire even when men turned their backs on it, and proclaimed themselves better without it. Behold a love which burned and brightened amid the coldness and the bleakness of a miserable world—which would not fail, even when the Saviour came into the deep pit and miry clay, and felt the weight of Almighty wrath, and the pains of infinite punishment. Behold and admire that love to you which maintained its intensity and its longings amid the desertions of professed friends, and amid the insults of envenomed foes—which outlived the sorrows of Gethsemane, the cruel treatment of the judgment-hall, and the unfathomable pangs of Calvary. Behold and admire that love which illumined the tomb, and rose through its darkness, leaving a pathway for you, and now pours forth from the right hand of the Father, melting the hearts of its enemies and cheering the hopes of its subjects, and resting not till the whole earth is beneath its benign and its saving influence. Behold, in the text, the most marvellous record in heaven, in earth, or in hell: God's eternal and omnipotent Son saving others, while himself he could not and would not save.

Thirdly: learn from this *what a fearful and obnoxious thing sin is*. Our spiritual eyesight is so blinded by the darkness and the contagion of guilt, and so accustomed to its hues, that we do not see it in its real magnitude, or fearful heinousness. But must we not presume, whatever our senses may infer, that sin must be a most sinful thing, a most accursed element, when the only alternative left, in order to banish it from creation, was this, that man should die, or that God's incarnate Son should die; that in no way could it be blotted away from creation's face, but by so dread an alternative!

Lastly, my reverend fathers and brethren, we see in this text, *what must be the great theme of the gospel ministry*. The philosophy of earth is foolishness, but the cross of Christ is wisdom. And the reasoning of the world is weakness, but the Cross is power. And, in proportion to the earnestness and fulness with which we press this great truth upon the consciences and the hearts of our people, will be the success of our ministrations in the midst of them. Now, unto Him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy—to the only wise God, even our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power. Amen.

## A LIFE OF PLEASURE A LIFE OF DEATH.

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REV. J. HAMBLETON, A.M.

CHAPEL OF EASE, HOLLOWAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1834.

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"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."—1 TIMOTHY, v. 6.

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IF this be true—and, being part of the Word of God, it must be true—then the world of pleasure is a region of death, and a life of pleasure is a living death. These are strange tidings for those who live only for pleasure, and who boast that they alone, of all mankind, enjoy life. Strange tidings these for those also who, with some outward attention to religion, yet continue, in heart and life, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

But who is meant by the person that liveth in pleasure? That shall be our first consideration. Secondly, how is that person dead while alive? These two points, with the practical advice which may arise out of them, may furnish us with instruction, which I pray God to bless to your souls' profit in time and in eternity. The Lord assist us!

**FIRST: WHO IS MEANT BY THE PERSON THAT LIVETH IN PLEASURE?** It is important to make this plain, otherwise my aim will be missed; the arrow of God's word, instead of piercing the conscience, will spend its force, and fall harmless to the ground.

And this point does require explanation; for the word "pleasure," is one strangely abused: it has quite a different meaning in different companies, and among different men. There are pleasures in science, pleasures in sin; pleasures in holiness here, and in heaven, we know, there are pleasures for ever more. Who, then, is the person meant by the Apostle, as living in pleasure, and therefore dead while alive? The Apostle is speaking, you will remember (for it was our second lesson this evening), of the rules to be observed in the Christian church, in regard to the ministrations made in those days, for destitute widows. He directs a distinction to be observed, according to the difference of character. "Honour widows that are widows indeed;" and their character is explained in the fifth verse: "Now, she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Now this is evidently a character just the reverse; that of one who trusteth not in God, who neglects supplication and prayers. The same character is further described more at length in the eleventh and the thirteenth verses: wantonness, idleness, wandering about from house



to house, tattling, the spirit of busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not—are given as characteristics of her that liveth in pleasure.

The original word, “liveth in pleasure,” is very peculiar, and is used in only one other place in the New Testament, namely, in James, v. 5. We will turn to it; for I am anxious to convince you all that I am not dressing up some notion of my own, as a phantom that I call pleasure: the solemn language of life and of death, respecting those who live in pleasure, is far too serious to be trifled with by me or by you. Now, in that passage of St. James, he is addressing the wealthy, and the luxurious: “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.” Then, in the fifth verse—“Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter:” where the word that is translated “ye have been wanton,” is the very same word with that which, in our text, is rendered “liveth in pleasure:” and the whole passage strikingly describes what kind of character is intended. Thus it is plain already, that to live in pleasure, is to live without trust or faith in God, without constant prayer; in wantonness, idleness, trifling, the pride of wealth; in luxury, sensuality, and self-indulgence. This is the life of worldly pleasure.

But there are yet many other Scriptures which describe the life of pleasure; and I am anxious you should feel the scriptural force of the subject. Thus, in the Prophet Amos, in the sixth chapter: “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of nations, to whom the house of Israel came. Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph.” Again you see the spirit of the child of pleasure: he makes himself “at ease;” he “puts far away the evil day:” he is self-indulgent, luxurious, gay, and jovial; he feels not for the affliction of God’s afflicted people.

In the book of Job, we have another description of men living in worldly pleasure—in his twenty-first chapter: “Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?” Here, again, you see the life of pleasure to be a life of unsanctified prosperity, festivity, mirth, wealth; with the spirit of infidelity mocking at religion, asking, What good in prayer—what end to serve God? O, ye that have lived in pleasure, does not your conscience feel, “My life is detected; my character has been described?”

So in our Lord's parable; the rich man, who fared sumptuously every day, and was clothed in purple and fine linen, was evidently a man of pleasure—luxurious, self-indulgent, fond of dress. The city of Sodom was a city of pleasure: and "This," says the Scripture, "was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good."

Then think of Babylon, once filled with the gayest of the gay; see that city of pleasure described in the Prophet Isaiah: "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the mill-stones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered; yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man. As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. I was wrath with my people, I have polluted my inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst thou remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thy enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me." My friends, again you see, from Scripture, the spirit of those who are given to pleasure, luxury, delicacy, self-security; no laying of serious things to heart, no thought of the latter end; carelessness of living, and trust in wickedness; the attempt to deceive the Omnipotent—"None seeth me;" perverted wisdom, abused knowledge, vain confidence of heart. It is thus they think, and speak, and act, who are living in worldly pleasure.

I have thus endeavoured to open the Scriptural character of one who lives in pleasure. Your consciences are my witnesses that I have kept closely to the written Word: and my motive has been, that I might, with God's blessing, touch those who, with a professed regard for Scripture, and with the name of Christians, have yet, up to this day, been living in pleasure. I ask you all to consider whether, if I have faithfully described that character, that character is not every where to be found; whether it has not been the character of many of you; whether it is not still that of some whom I am now addressing. Have you not known some, living in ease, mirth, joviality, wantonness, pride, sensuality, self-indulgence—some one who neglected prayer, and stubbornly refused to serve God—some one whose idol was dress, or vanity, or pleasure—some one who would not lay these things to heart, and would not consider the latter end

thereof? Then you have known some one such as the Apostle meant by one living in pleasure.

And let no such persons think that ministers feel a delight in thus exposing their character. We could say, with the Apostle, "For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures." We know what worldly pleasure is: we are anxious to undeceive you all, as to its true character; our desire is to save you from its fatal snares. The children of pleasure know not the concern with which their ministers, if faithful to their duty, witness or hear of their sins. They may, it may be, account us their foes; but we feel to them as friends. We know that those vanities cannot satisfy; that a serpent is lurking in that flowery path; that a life of pleasure is not a life of happiness; yea, that it is death rather than life: therefore we must sorrow, and pray, and weep over you who are still lovers of pleasure.

And let none think that the scriptural description of one that liveth in pleasure applies only to the rich and the great of this world. I grant that they have the temptation; and if the poor have less temptation than the rich to live in pleasure, they have cause to thank God for this advantage of their poor estate. But the temptation is common to all ranks: persons in middle life, and persons in the lowest walks of life, may be found to live continually in pleasure. This do all the intemperate. O what sums the poor and labouring classes spend in the present day, on needless, noxious, inflammatory drink! What is this but to live in pleasure? Then think of the licentiousness of both sexes—(nay, think not, the thought is grievous)—of the numbers who, living in wantonness from week to week, till death overtakes them. Think of the theatres, and places of worldly amusement. Can any man, who has studied the Bible, seriously maintain that those who frequent those places are not, the great and vast majority, lovers of pleasure? Or will any man try to persuade us that they come home thence to pray to God, to ~~any~~ serious things to heart, to remember the latter end? Will any one deny that in those places the name of God is blasphemed, bad passions are fomented, vice glossed over, piety ridiculed, or kept out of sight? Yet thither flock high and low, rich and poor.

Then think of the spirit of gambling; the time wasted, the bad passions excited, the families ruined, by that destructive vice; which is far from being confined to the rich and great. Or think of the Sabbath-breaking, the making God's day a day of pleasure, though the Scripture says, "Turn away thy foot from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure." Here again the charge belongs to many of all ranks—You are living in pleasure.

My brethren, I am almost weary of this part of our subject: you know I love better to be speaking of Jesus Christ, and his salvation. But it is needful, sometimes at least, to shew to the world, in a distinct manner, their character in the light of Scripture. You now know who it is that is living in pleasure. "And what is the harm?" say some; "what if we do live in pleasure; you have your pleasures, and we have ours. You call religion a pleasure; we call it a misery. Our taste is for what you call worldly pleasure; we own we love it dearly: we see no great harm in it, though you have contrived to describe it accurately enough. We only discover that tastes differ.

If that is all, our subject has a second part. Are any of you proved to have been those who have been living in pleasure? Then this is God's judgment of the state of such: "**SHE THAT LIVETH IN PLEASURE**"—WHOEVER LIVETH IN PLEASURE—"IS DEAD WHILE ALIVE." Now that is the sentiment, or rather the sentence, of God himself. "What does it mean? 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth:'—how can one be dead while alive? What a paradox; we cannot understand it." I think you can, if you try. Dead while alive. Think of that serious, pious Christian, *once* in the circle of your acquaintance, *once* a friend, and even a brother; but *now* he seems as one dead to all your pleasures; dead to the world; dead indeed unto sin. You say in scorn, that you might as well ask a dead man as ask him to join your worldly pleasure: he has become what you term a poor lifeless creature: he is buried alive. Then you can understand how a man may be dead while alive; alive naturally, and, though you may not know it, alive spiritually; and yet dead to what you call the pleasures of life. But, in God's judgment, your state is just the reverse to that; you are alive to pleasure, but dead towards God.

How true, how just, how striking that description! The dead neither move, nor see, nor hear, nor smell, nor feel. Your heart moves not in love to God; your mind's eye sees no suitableness in the Saviour; you hear not his voice; you perceive no fragrance in his name, like that of ointment poured forth; you feel not the constraining force of his dying love. The dead breathe not: there is no pulse of holy delight; no joy beating in that pleasure-loving heart. The dead sigh not: and when does God hear from you the sighing of a contrite heart? The dead are cold; their touch is chilling to the hand: and you (I must speak faithfully, even though I offend for the moment, if I might but win your souls)—you, though warm in the service of pleasure, are cold as ice, cold as death, when God is mentioned. Thus are you without spiritual life, not quickened by the Holy Spirit, strangers to Him who is our life, as many of you who are still lovers of pleasure.

Then death is, further, a state of insensibility and helplessness. The dead body knows not that it is dead; it has no consciousness: and so they who are spiritually dead, are often unconscious of their state for years together; they give it no thought; they have no spiritual feeling. The thunder may roll over the dead body; the lightnings may flash around it; ministers may be preaching in the church on subjects of the deepest interest to every human being; the dead in the church-yard around, or in the vaulted chambers beneath, sleep on in utter indifference. So, oftentimes the thunders of the law of God disturb not the souls chained in pleasure; the flashes of God's wrath, which ever and anon break forth between the clouds and darkness which surround us, are by them less heeded than the lightning of a summer's evening. Ministers may preach how they please, they will not come to hear; or hearing they will not understand. O, there is a deadness, a stupor, an awful insensibility, in careless, pleasure-loving souls. And there is a *helplessness* too: no man hath quickened his own soul. Only Christ can command the dead man to arise, and be instantly obeyed. We are to exhort in his name, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead;" but in saying it we look, and we entreat you to look, to Christ for his grace to make the command effectual. The dead soul is an *impotent* thing. It is good to feel this; the feeling it is a sign, often the first



sign, of life: let it lead you to entreat the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life.

But further still: "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth," *because under sentence of death*. If a criminal were convicted of murder, or some capital crime, and sentenced to death, in the interval between his sentence and his execution he is considered as dead in the eye of the law. The king might reprieve him for a season, or send him a free pardon; but in the eye of the law he is dead. And is there not a sentence of death passed on every one that is living in worldly pleasure? Is there no sin in not loving God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength? Is there no sin in misemploying the talent of life—in wasting health, strength, and precious time, in a round of frivolity, luxury, dissipation, and sensuality? In all that there is sin, the continued cause of sin; and "the wages of sin is death." The sentence, therefore, is past: Lovers of pleasure, you are prisoners condemned to die. This is the interval between the sentence and the execution: you are reprieved for a little interval; you are dependent on the king's mercy: will you not humbly sue for his free pardon?

And that, as the minister of Christ, I am sent to offer. In the name of the King of Heaven, in the name of the King's own Son, who died to atone for the sins of man, I offer to every one this evening who has been living in pleasure, a free pardon, and a full salvation. Ye lovers of pleasure, look to that long-neglected Saviour. In the midst of your vain mirth and sensual delights, you have thought nothing of the Man of Sorrows: you have not considered the anguish with which sin pierced his heart; the agony which he sustained under the load of our guilt; the horror which filled his mind, when God had forsaken him for a moment, as he might have justly forsaken us for eternity. And *there*, sinners, is your life: Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; he endured that sentence of death for us: there is life for your souls, if you will trust him for your salvation. And, lo, while feeling and confessing sin—while looking with anxious faith to Christ as you never looked before, God, you will find, has been at work in your souls, infusing life and grace. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." He hath brought you who were living in pleasure to begin to live to God. "If any man be in Christ"—and if we are found in Christ, it is by a true faith—"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

But are you afraid that you shall now lose all pleasure? You will lose the phantom, and gain the substance; you will throw away the counterfeit, and receive genuine gold; you will drop worldly pleasure, which is connected with death, which has death inseparably tied to it, and enjoy spiritual pleasure, which is connected with eternal life. While the lovers of pleasure are such, they wonder at Christians who will not run with them to the same excess of riot—that will not run their round of frivolity and dissipation; and yet it is a remarkable fact, that as soon as any of them become impressed with divine truth, see the evil of sin, the shortness of life, the work of Christ, the love of the Father, and the spiritual character of the religion of which the Holy Spirit is the inward teacher—they all, one after another, drop their love of vain pleasure, and see that there is, and must be, a wide distinction between the spirit of the world

and the spirit of Christ. Thus, while none go back from us to the world (except here and there a Demas, or a Judas, or a Simon Magus, or a hypocrite, or a backslider) many of the world are continually coming over to us. As they acquire a taste for new and spiritual pleasures, their taste for old vain pleasure is gone. They have tried vanity long enough: they know what the world has to offer; they have discovered the emptiness of its promises, the deceitfulness of its smiles, the insipid character of its pleasures. They well know that worldly pleasure deadens all spiritual feeling, choaks the good seed—enslaves, debases, surfeits, and wearies the spirit of man; that it is inconsistent with the love of God; that it ends in vexation, disappointment, and death. Hence, just as the burnt child dreads the fire, so in every renewed soul there is a holy dread of worldly pleasure. And if whoso liveth in pleasure is dead while alive, the world must excuse us, or, if they will not excuse us, they may call us unsociable, if they will: if our souls have any spiritual life, if we would cherish that life, if we would not become dead before God, how can the living and the dead be close and intimate companions?

But I had not meant to say much more which might seem harsh to those who will still be of the world; I was endeavouring to lead those who are desirous of coming out of the world to come into new life. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." The pleasure of spiritual religion (I mean the entering into the religion of the cross of Christ, heart and soul) are of a satisfying nature: they bring peace to the conscience. Does worldly pleasure effect that? Is every heart happy in the gay circle? There is something in the knowledge of God's reconciling love through Christ Jesus, which enters, pervades, and fills the heart—which sustains under trials, which elevates the affections, which refines the soul. Now you who have tried it most, know that worldly pleasure leaves sometimes an aching void, and sometimes a sting in the heart; that it fades and withers before the breath of trouble; that it debases the affections, and stupifies the soul. In the new pleasures to which I invite, there is an independence of man and outward things. The lover of pleasure is dependent on many things and persons for his gratification; but the pious Christian can be happy with his Bible and his God, though everything besides were gone. Though health, fortune, and friends, were all vanished, still he could say, or rather he could sing, with the prophet—"Although the fig-tree shall not bloom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation." Thus there is an independence in religious pleasure; a pleasure independent of man; dependent on the faithful God. The Christian carries what has been well called a portable joy about with him, in the secret of his heart.

Then how noble, sublime, and glorious, are the objects with which religion is conversant. The knowledge of God, the greatest and the best of all beings; the wonders of creation; the mysteries of redemption; the covenant of grace; the system of Providence; the eternity that is to come, the grace and glory of Immanuel; the things of the Spirit of God; "whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely and of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," these things religion makes the subject of

pleasant acquaintance. Now what are worldly pleasures put by the side of spiritual pleasures? Will the topics of conversation in circles of worldly pleasure bear to be examined in the light of His word, who has said, that for every idle word that man shall utter they shall give account in the day of judgment? What is there in their world of fiction, so grand, so glorious, so vitally interesting, as the realities, the sober realities of our religion? What are the world's vanities to the pious Christian more than the toys of childhood to the man?

I add but another thought. Religious pleasures are the best, for they have the approving smile of God on them now, and they can be carried with the soul into another world, and there be ripened into perfection. The worldly man must contradict the plain Word of God if he fancies he is walking under the smile of God's favour. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And the pleasures of sin are but for a season; they must die when you die: they will continue to live but in bitter remembrance. Now, why walk contrary to God? Why try to do without His smile who lights up heaven with gladness? Why meet His frown which fills hell with terror? Why still love pleasure; which you know leads to death?

"Stay, thou unhappy sinner, stay,  
Smooth gliding down the flow'ry way,  
The broad frequented road;  
Stay wretch that dost in pleasure live,  
And all thy joy on earth receive,  
Thy soul is dead to God.  
By death when summon'd to depart,  
If dead to God, even then thou art  
Excluded from the skies:  
Shut up in darkness palpable,  
And justly left to its own hell,  
Thy soul for ever dies."

The subject has been chiefly to lovers of pleasure: let me hope it has not spoken to them in vain. I have thus tried to shew them that their life is death, and to invite them to a new life, to new and better pleasures. And now who is persuaded? There must be the earnest desire, the vigorous effort, the determined resolution, the importunate prayer. The world is such a tyrant, pleasure such an enchantress, Satan so crafty; they will keep you if they can, bound in their three-fold cords for ever. May God enable you, by his great grace, to come out and be separate!

This subject must, if attended to, also have detected some who try to keep friends with the world and the professing Church of Christ; to have the pleasures of the world, and the credit of being religious at the same time. They are here to-day, to-morrow they are in the world's vanities: now in the religious meeting, presently in the gay party: bowing the knee to Christ in one place, bowing the knee, or the heart, to some golden image which the god of this world has set up and consecrated in another. But are they dead or alive? Are they living in pleasure, or living to God? My friends, that doubtful, mongrel, spotted sort of religion will not serve. A doubtful piety will prove but a sorry comfort in trouble. There must be decision in order to any real benefit from our religion. I cannot but fear that you have but skimmed

along the surface of religion, like the insect sipping the flower, or the bird just dipping its wings in the water. You have not come heart and spirit to religion, or you would have come heart and soul out of this vain world.

You, my brethren, who have so come, exhort over and over again those who are living in pleasure. You were so once living in danger; who but God made you to differ? I need not say, do not envy the world in their pleasures: you know that they will soon have done with pleasure for ever, unless they repent and find mercy through Christ. But this should be our heart's desire for them—to recommend this religion whose ways are pleasantness indeed to their notice and to draw them, if we can, to our gracious Saviour. To this object should tend your example, your influence, your prayers, from day to day. Shew them that while you must shun worldly pleasures, for your soul's life requires it, yet you are cheerful, contented, and happy. Pray for a blessing on this poor effort to win, if it be but one child, from vain pleasures over to God. The Lord grant at least one soul as my triumph, and my gracious reward for this evening's service.



## THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

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REV. J. M. RODWELL, A.M.

ST PETER'S CHURCH, SAFFRON HILL, NOVEMBER 23, 1834.

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‘ The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.’—ISAIAH, lvii. 15.

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THE great object of all our preaching, and of all our assemblings here together, Sabbath after Sabbath, is, that your ministers may be made the instruments, in the hands of God, of raising you above yourselves, and lifting you from earth to heaven, from time to eternity, through the preaching of his Word, blessed to your souls, by the aid of his ever-present Spirit. This we are to do by contrasting to you your own actual state with that which God expects and demands of his creatures: this we are to effect by setting before you the comparative value of earth and heaven, the nothingness of the one, and the all-sufficiency of the other—the unsanctified and deluding joys which earth, at its best, is able to put into your hands, with those blessed realities of truth, and love, and holiness, which heaven can give you foretastes of, even in the prospect, in the blessed and sure earnest of that “fulness of joy” which hereafter awaits those in whose bosoms, on earth, is sown the blessed seed of immortality and holiness. We are to set before you man as a sinner, and God as holy; man as short-lived, brief, and passing—God as eternal and unchangeable. We are to set before you man as a creature crushed before the moth, whose days are even as a span, in comparison of that immense eternity in which the Almighty dwells. We are to set before you this earthly tenement of clay, which now shackles, fetters, and clogs the immortal spirit; and to compare it with that pure, that spiritual, and that glorious body with which the saints of God shall be clothed upon, when the Judge shall come to award to each their final, their eternal doom. We are to set before you man, not merely as consisting of this wretched body in which he is now clothed, but as consisting of an immortal spirit. We are to tell you that man is not all dust; but that there is a spirit within him, forming part of himself. What that spirit is, none but the living God can tell: it is that strange something within us which no human eye has ever seen; but without which we can do nothing, and are nothing. We are to speak to you of those souls which dwell in our bodies, and animate and rule them, but are not confined to them: for we know that, spurning the limits of time and space, the soul can rove among things that are past, as though it had lived in them; that it flies to the utmost limits of the earth, and ranges among the orbs of heaven, and goes beyond them. We know that our soul has that power in it, by which, when guided by the light from heaven, it can rise to the great God of heaven, and penetrate into that invisible eternity in which he dwells; that it can elevate,

transform, and expand itself, when it is led to dwell in the exercise of truths which emanate alone from him. We are to set before you the spiritual nature of man's soul; in order that by looking upon the power of man, of man as a spirit, we may also see how infinitely greater must be the power of God, who is a spirit.

If the soul of man, bowed down, and clogged, and fettered as it is with sin, can at times soar above all that is visible; if the soul of man, in its present weak and abject state, can investigate all science, bring the elements down at its bidding, and grasp immortal truths; how great must be the power of that holy God, in whom dwells all that is awful in power, all that is venerable in wisdom, and all that is holy in purity: and if the joys which our souls can at times feel, in the light of the Gospel, and the knowledge of God, be *now* so great; if there be a peace and joy in believing, which at times steals into our bosoms, and fills the parched wilderness of this life with wells of water; how great must be that river of joy which the soul shall realize when the great God himself shall pour the full stream of grace, and love, and truth, into the sinner's heart; when we shall see him face to face, and, in clear and open vision, know him even as we are known!

And, most of all, we are to set before you **THE ETERNITY OF THE SOUL, AND THE ETERNITY OF GOD**, as being inseparably connected the one with the other, and the one a result from the other. We are to consider the importance, the nearness, and the influence of eternity, and of eternal things; of eternity as an attribute of God—of eternity as the home in which God dwells—of eternity as the state to which he calls us. We are sure that no thoughtful and no reflecting mind can ever divest itself of the notion of eternity. The man may indeed refuse to think, as many are wont to do, on any serious subject at all; but he who thinks to any purpose, cannot refuse to admit the truth before us—that God is an eternal God, though he know little or nothing of the powers of the world to come. Our souls are gifted with powers which enable them to look back over the ages that are past. You may imagine a period before the heavens and the earth were made, ere yet the sun was a light by day, and the moon and the stars for a light by night; you may travel back myriads of ages, till you get beyond the boundary of creation, and arrive at the time (if time it may be called,) ere God had formed one of those blessed spirits which are around his throne—ere one note of praise was breathed forth to Him whose mercy endureth for ever. But stretch imagination as you will, you cannot imagine a period at which God was not, at which he was not “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” because it is clear, that had such a period ever existed, nothing ever could have been brought into existence. And it is by bringing our minds to dwell on this point, the eternal nature of the holy God, that we may gain some glimpses of the past eternity, and learn to bow with reverence before His throne, who exists from everlasting to everlasting; in whose sight thousands and millions of ages are but as a passing day; whose existence will continue as now it is, and has been from the beginning, ere the earth was formed on which we tread, and as it will be even after this world shall be blotted out of the book of existence, and be found no more.

Brethren, these things are no barren speculation. Perhaps there is not a more holy and a more sanctifying employment, than that of considering the

eternity of God ; because, if God through everlasting ages can alone continue the same, if he alone is the anchor of our hope, he alone is worthy the confidence of sinful and dying men. The sacred writers all knew the value of this truth : they knew and felt the importance of the declaration, that the eternal God was their refuge : and inasmuch as before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the waters were framed, from everlasting to everlasting he was God, they knew that he, and he alone, was their dwelling-place in all generations. Here is the great distinction between the creature and the Creator. Angels and archangels, and all the powers and principalities of heaven, are indeed immortal, and do not die : but they do not, as God does, *inhabit* eternity ; and though they will never cease to exist, yet there was a time when they did not exist. They are, as we are, the workmanship of the hand of God : he is for ever independent, but they are for ever dependent : and whether it be men on earth, or whether it be the race of creatures, if such there be, who people far-off worlds ; or whether it be angels who are vast in might, brilliant in purity, strong in glowing love, and awful in celestial vigour—upon him our all depends ; from him, the Great Eternal, does all existence flow ; whatever is good ordained, whatever is evil permitted ; whatever is present, being of his performance, whatever is future, being of his appointment : to this eternal, to this “high and holy One,” whose temple is all space—who alone can never change—who actuates, at the same moment, all the machinery of the universe—who guides the motions of every planet, and the dashings of every cataract ; to Him, who deals out existence to every breathing thing—to Him, in whom we live, and move, and have our being—to Him, the holy, and the just, and the good, it is our object to lead your thoughts : on Him, the fountain of your existence, and the Author of your being, it is our object to fix your thoughts. And we would take that as a withered and blighted heart which can feel no interest in the inquiry excited, no sympathy with this mighty theme.

But we need not enter into any lengthened argument to prove, in order to awaken men to this important truth, that every one of us has to do with an eternal God. We not merely gather from the temptations, and the trials, and the adversities of life, that this present state is preparatory to the future judgment, and a school for the future world ; neither for this need we go to that volume which shows how life and immortality are brought to light : for there is an echo still lingering in our bosoms, dark and sinful as they are, of an eternal world. We feel that we have in us capacities for happiness and for misery : we know that we have within us desires, if not fears, which breathe of immortality, which nothing of an earthly nature can ever satisfy. And while some, through a realizing faith in the Saviour, have that holy joy, a real foretaste of eternal blessedness, sinners have also felt that dread remorse which seems the very prelude of eternal despair. And hence we find, in all ages of the world, among savage as well as civilized nations, the prevalent belief of this truth, that there is an eternal God, and that there is another state. And it seems to me one of those truths which the finger of God has written on the heart of man, which sin and ignorance, though they may for a time darken, overcloud, and almost smother, yet never can extinguish or blot it out altogether. That man amongst us who at this moment is farthest from his God and Saviour—that man who has experienced least of the powers of the world to

come—that man who is unable to look into eternity with aught of hope, and with aught of joy and peace in believing—even he, dark and sinful as his heart may be, cannot help feeling there is something in him which whispers of another state: he cannot but feel something of a foreboding, as he looks forward to another state. God has provided each of us with a conscience: and that conscience, if we do but allow it to do its work, will break out, sooner or later, like the plague, and will fill our hours of affliction with ten-fold anguish; will fill our beds of death with the darkness of despair; will fill eternity itself with unavailing regret and anguish. Yes—we have immortal spirits, and we must have an interest in immortal things. Before our immortal spirits can have peace we must know our God; ere the aching void in the immortal heart can be possibly filled up, we must come to the Saviour, who will build a bridge for us to pass from time to eternity, before we can ever look on eternity with peace, with comfort, and with joy.

But consider, secondly, **THE NEARNESS OF THIS ETERNITY—THE NEARNESS OF THAT HIGH AND HOLY ONE THAT INHABITS ETERNITY.** In regard to its moral influence, eternity is a thing neither distant nor obscure. Nothing but the breath in our bodies separates us from that boundless ocean into which the stream of time is carrying the race of men. Death is the gate of eternity; and the moment we enter into it, the secrets of the invisible world open upon us; our connexion with things visible will then be for ever gone; we shall be the inhabitants of another world, and converse with other beings. Death does this; it beats down the prison wall, and then the soul, like a captive exile, takes its flight to its native element. The return of the spirit to God is in Scripture always represented as an immediate occurrence, and takes place at the very moment when the silver cord is loosed, and when the wheel of life is stopped. Superstition, or vanity, or it may be affection, may for a time detain the body; but the soul, when God says to it, “Return,” in a moment stands naked and trembling before his throne. My brethren, we are too apt to look upon the realities of eternity as distant. We are apt to think, that between us and the awful scenes we hear of, many hundreds of years of insensibility and nothingness will intervene, and that our souls will sleep in some unknown land, until the close of all things. The Word of God asserts the very contrary. What was the word of Jesus to the dying malefactor? “To-day,” said he, “shalt thou be with me in Paradise:” and was he to be there senseless and lifeless? No; but alive to his glories, and transported to the blessedness of heaven. And when Paul thought of being absent from the body, what did he connect with this as its immediate and necessary consequence? That he should be ‘present with the Lord.’ Brethren, you are living just as near to eternity as you are living to your graves: the hour of your entering into heaven, or being cast into hell, is not one moment farther off than the hour of your own death. Your spirit, when called from the body, will not be hovering over its departed clay; not mingling unseen, as poetry would tell us, with your children and your friends, to soothe itself with their sorrow for your loss: no, it will be instantly among eternal joys or eternal sorrows, far from the abodes of men, in the midst of the perfected and justified, or among the condemned and lost—sharing in bitter wailings and awful gnashings, or else bathing in those



fountains of eternal blessedness which flow from the throne of God and the Lamb, joining in their songs of triumph in their everlasting victory over sin and sorrow.

This reflection on the nearness of eternity, will make way for the most important consideration of all, namely, **THE INFLUENCE WHICH ETERNITY SHOULD HAVE ON US.** You will readily perceive, that the subject we are considering, imparts infinite value to everything to which it extends its influence. If we speak of peace, of joy, or of hope, whose heart does not bound at the prospect, and who is not seeking for these very things? We speak to you of *eternal* peace, of *eternal* life, and of *eternal* joy; we set these things before you in such an infinite importance, that no skill of man can estimate them as they deserve. We tell you that Jehovah is an eternal God, and that obedience is due to him: but when we say that Jehovah is an eternal God, then we bring before you eternal love, eternal justice, eternal truth, mercy, power, and wisdom, and all the perfections of his eternal nature; attributes which remain the same for ever; justice which never diminishes, truth which never fails, love which never changes: therefore the children of men are to put their trust in him, and to abide under the shadow of the eternal God.

The question, therefore, is, Are the attributes of the eternal God engaged on our behalf, or are they against us? They are for us if we are united with his Son, and reconciled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The name whereby he shall be called, the only name by which peace can be spoken to our souls when we look upon God, is "Jehovah our Righteousness." God out of Christ (O we have nothing to do with him) God out of Christ is a consuming fire; his every attribute engaged in punishing, and bent upon the destruction of sin; and alas! we are all sinners. But God in Christ is love. Mercy—which cannot go forth until the justice of God has been satisfied—righteousness, peace, and truth, have met together, and are held in happy embrace in the person of Jesus Christ, for the salvation of sinners. "Behold the days come," saith the Lord, speaking, by the prophet Jeremiah, of Gospel times, "that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel" (that is, the Israel of God, the true people of God in all ages of the world) "shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness. Therefore behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;" the Israel of God are now to tune their harps to a nobler song, and to lift up their voices in gratitude for another and nobler deliverance; "but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country"—out of the cold, and frozen, and chilly regions of sin whither it had driven them; "and they shall dwell in their own land"—even in the Gospel vineyard which the Saviour had purchased for them.

O consider, then, what is involved in the redemption by the Eternal One, even the redemption of our souls by the blood and righteousness of Christ from infinite and eternal misery; and not only this, but its exaltation to infinite and eternal happiness. This is an event of such importance as no mortal can

conceive, no language can tell. We read in Scripture that even angels rejoice at this ; they rejoice at that change which leads a man to begin to march from the land of his captivity, towards the heavenly Canaan, and choose God for his portion, Christ for his all, the saints and angels for his friends and his society. And why do the blessed and rejoicing companies of heaven thus rejoice afresh in the conversion of every sinner ? The reason is, because they are in the presence of that Eternal One, and dwelling in that eternity, to which the sinner has begun to turn. The reason why they rejoice is, because they can appreciate the greatness of that happiness which they enjoy themselves, and which is now in reserve for him : because they dwell in that glory which he is now led to seek : because they know, that whatever may be his present sufferings, they are but light and for a moment, and shall issue in the harvest of eternal joy : because they long have enjoyed the height and the depth, and the length and the breadth of that eternity which is the seal of the felicity which is promised to every saved soul ; that which stamps it as an eternal felicity, even the eternal gift of God through Jesus Christ. Yes, they rejoice over us, as well they may, because they too apprehend the mysterious and the undefinable value of the soul ; its intense powers, as a rational, moral, and accountable substance, incapable alike of extinction and of death, through all the infinity of duration. All these things are clear to them, though they may be obscure and uninteresting to us, whose eyes are blinded by sin, whose hearts are held by iniquity, who are but of yesterday and know nothing, and who are crushed before the moth. Pray that the work of the Spirit may be begun upon your minds, because the seed that he sows is sown for eternity. O remember that love, and peace, and joy, are the seeds of grace, which time shall not extinguish, nor the grave consume, but which eternity shall ripen. These are the heavenly tempers which shall make you meet for heaven ; these are the streams which shall supply the never-dying spirit with the water of life.

Consider the influence which the knowledge of the eternal God, and the thoughts of eternity, ought to have *on all earthly things*. You see at once what a shadow eternity casts upon all earthly glory. Before eternity, the lustre of the diadem fades ; the bravery of ambition and of pride is obscured and confined ; our three-score years and ten are like the moments of a wintry day ; and all our pursuits, if unconnected with eternity, are like the feverish dreams of sickness, without substance and without reality. Sublime and most awfully true were the words of one who had a full share of all that this world can give, and who has left them upon record, that the man who lives for this world, “ walketh in a vain shew, and disquieteth himself in vain.” If our souls, through infinite grace, have found a home in eternity, O they will be strangers to many of those harassing fears, those gloomy forebodings, those distressing feelings, and those over-anxious and over-eager desires, which so fatally disturb our peace, and prey upon the very vitals of almost all our happiness. Why is it we are thus engrossing all our thoughts, wearying ourselves, fighting (as it were) about the trifles of a mere day ? And why is it we one moment rise exultingly on the tide of prosperity, and the next moment sink, it may be, in the hour of adversity, upon that very wave when it recedes into the very depths of despair ? Why is it we know so little ? Why is it we are filled with pride and discontent, when we ought to be humbled and repenting in the day of affliction ?

O, it is all simply because we are looking for rest short of eternity; it is because we are looking for rest on the bosom of the unquiet and deceitful ocean, instead of keeping our eye on the haven of our rest, eternal life through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. I know not what to call it but the evil heart of unbelief—the eye blinded, that it cannot see—and the heart waxing gross that it will not, because it cannot, feel the power of unseen and eternal things. It is this which is our most dangerous, our most besetting sin. It is this sin of actual unbelief, and closing our eyes upon eternity, which robs us, and dishonours God—which abuses his mercy—which rivets upon us fast the woes, and the cares, and the things of earth—which wounds the tender heart of Him that died for us men, and for our salvation—which grieves and dismisses from us the only comfort of this wretched world—which cuts us off from adoption into his family, the family of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity. What you want, and what I want, and that which may God give us grace to ask for, is, a deep perception that heaven is a real thing, and that hell, which is banishment from God, is a real thing: what we need is, a faith that can make excursions into the future; a faith which may overcome the world, and despise its attractions, and enable us to use it without abusing it; a faith which may enable you to travel onward through life, like men and women who have heard the sound of vengeance, and felt that you deserve it, and yet, in a holy confidence, assured that the vials of that vengeance have been poured on the head of One who bore our burden, expiated our guilt, and is gone before to prepare mansions for us in that eternity to which he calls us.

O brethren, let me, in conclusion, tell you, that there is an event about to take place in your history and in mine, which is of far greater importance than anything we have ever yet experienced. I do not speak of the success or the failure of our earthly schemes—of changes in our worldly condition—of sudden riches, or of sudden poverty: I speak not of the loss of friends, and children, and of kindred; but I speak of our falling into dust and ashes; of the departing of your soul, and my soul, into the presence of its Judge, “the High and the Holy One that inhabiteth eternity.” And who can tell us what that presence is? As we think of that, the change which shall soon pass upon the body is almost forgotten: but that the soul should appear before the great, and hitherto unseen Jehovah—to see Him eye to eye, and face to face—to have done with the world and all things that dwell in it, to stand before infinite majesty, purity, and justice—to be in the world of spirits, and to be spirits ourselves—to hear a voice consigning us for ever to happiness we have never yet conceived, or to misery which even the vilest sinner, in his deepest wretchedness, has never known; who is not bewildered at the very thought? And yet this very appearance before God we must experience; this bewildering, this overwhelming thought, we must realize: there is no prospect, there is no possibility, of our escaping; we shall as surely face our Judge in eternity, as we now know one another here. And we may be summoned to all this in an instant. Our soul is kept from returning to Him who gave it—by what? By a little dust; by a body so frail, and liable to so many dangers, that they who know its construction best, wonder that it holds together for a single hour.

Brethren, what think ye of these things—these certain, these important, and these near events which are coming upon you? Have they occupied your atten-

tion, and have they influenced your conduct? Have they made the Gospel most welcome to you, the Saviour most precious, the world a thing of nought? If not, what can we say to you? What says the Word of God to you; and what does conscience say to you, but "Thou fool!" There is something awful in the prospect of eternity, even to the man who all his life long has been preparing to enter into it; and who knows that in any world, and in any state, he is safe in Christ. This very day, if such an one has thought of it, he has prayed and he has trembled as he thought of it; while the unprepared and the unpraying were at ease and were light-hearted. The thoughtless man will sometimes feel a little passing and momentary anxiety when he thinks that his body must die; but let him remember that his soul is dying already; that the death of the body is but the triumph of sin upon a little dust, but that unconcern about eternity, is the triumph of sin over the immortal spirit.

But what do the thoughts of eternity, and of Him that inhabits it, say to every faithful servant of Jesus Christ? It says to them, "Be serious, be sober, be in earnest; sit loose from the world; think much of death; look for it; be every hour preparing to meet your God; let your loins be girt and your lights burning; and be yourselves also like unto men who wait for their Lord." It tells the believer in Christ that his body too must go to the dust from which it came: aye, and he may be well content to let it go; his Bible has told him it is a "vile body"—a body of corruption, of sin, and of death. And he has often found it true: its weakness and disease has often fettered and clogged his soul; its lusts and its vile affections have often made him abhor himself, and weep, and groan. But he knows that the corruptible shall put on incorruption, and the mortal put on immortality; and that, though it shall lie, for a time, in the dishonour and the ruin of the grave, it shall rise a pure, a spiritual mansion, made meet for the holy, and ransomed, and perfected soul, fashioned after the likeness of that glorious body in which the Son of Man himself dwells and reigns for ever.

And as for the believer's soul, that shall return to God who gave it: before his body shall have been consigned to the grave, his soul shall be in the bosom of his Lord in the heaven of his glory. This shall be thine, believer; and this is the end that is near at hand. There are no revolutions of tedious centuries between it and you: a few months—at the most, a few years—will find you in possession of that which God has promised, of all which heaven can give, and all which you can desire—possessed of that which is exceeding abundant above all that you can ask or think. I see, then, the effect which eternity ought to have upon me. I see that I must set my feet upon firm ground, fix my eye upon an eternal world, take a decided part, and walk with upright head and steady step, as one who is seeking that which is above. I see that I must be faithful to my Saviour and to my God: true to conscience, true to the desires and the hopes I have felt. I must not let pleasures entice, nor sin seduce, nor dangers intimidate. No: I have but one thing to fear, and that is sin: and if I flee from sin, and live for eternity, then an eternal world is my refuge—an eternal Spirit is my comforter—an eternal Saviour is my hope. With Abraham I will seek that eternal city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God:" with Moses I will have "respect to the recompense of the reward."



## THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.

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"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—ACTS, xvi. 25—31.

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THE scene of this awful story was the prison of a city called Philippi. The Apostle Paul and his companion Silas had been committed to that prison by the magistrates ; not for evil-doing, however, but for well-doing. (When Christians suffer for evil-doing, they may indeed be ashamed : but when they suffer for well-doing, they may glorify God on this behalf, for the Spirit of glory and of joy rests upon them to bless them.) There had been an accusation brought against Paul and Silas, that they had taught the people customs which 't was "not lawful for them to observe, being Romans." But the Apostles never interfered with the civil government of the country in which they dwelt ; and our Saviour would rather work a miracle than refuse to pay the tribute to him whose image and superscription stood upon the current coin. So that the accusation made against them was entirely false. The magistrates, however, either believed it, or pretended to believe it, and commanded the Apostles to be beaten ; which they were, with many stripes ; and then cast into prison, with charges to the jailer to keep them safely. These charges, doubtless, rung in the jailer's ears, and increased his confusion in that critical hour which we shall by and by consider.

The enemies of God's gracious Gospel appear now to have got the upper hand. The Apostles were seized, and, as they thought, silenced : but it was no such thing ; God would have his messengers proclaim salvation in the prison, to show that his mercy could reach down to the lowest dungeon ; and God would have the jailer both convinced and converted too. The people in the prison could not come to hear the glad tidings which were to be preached to every creature ; and therefore the Apostles must go to them. On this account the wrath of God was permitted to rage against God's servants ; and when they had done their work the storm was quieted ; as it is said in the seventy-sixth

Psalm: "The wrath of man shall turn to thy praise, O God; and the remainder of it shalt thou restrain."

The history of the matter was this: There was a damsel living at Philippi who was a fortune-teller, and got great gains to her master thereby. But God had mercy upon the poor creature; and when she believed she steadfastly forsook the service of the devil to follow Christ. This so enraged her masters that they caught Paul and Silas, and invented against them an accusation of treason: and thus they were committed, and thrust into the inner prison, and had their feet made fast in the stocks; where, filled with the Holy Spirit, and with the joy of their salvation, they sung songs of thanksgiving and praise at midnight.

In considering, however, the words of the text, I shall first call your attention to that further part of the history which describes the awakening of the jailer; secondly, consider the consequences of that awakening in raising up in his own mind the most important inquiry that can be made by man: and, thirdly, we shall show you the answer that was given to that inquiry.

First, then, I will call your attention to the further part of the history which describes **THE AWAKENING OF THE JAILER.**

The first circumstance that appears powerfully to have affected the jailer's mind was, great temporal calamity threatening his immediate ruin and death. Great, and sudden, and heavy afflictions are often sent by the providence of God on those whom he deeply loves, that he may bring them to their recollection, to their prayers, and to the bosom of their God: he cannot be satisfied till they are there, and will not therefore permit *them* to be so. But I am now speaking of this jailer. The songs of the prisoners, the noise of the earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison, and perhaps the shouts of the prisoners when they felt the chains and the bolts drop off them upon the ground—these sounds awakened him out of his sleep. The first sight that strikes his view, is the prison doors all open. The thought that the prisoners had escaped struck his mind with despair. He remembered, it may be, in a moment, how many enemies, who perhaps had resisted his appointment, would now triumph in his disgrace. He remembered the peculiar charges he had received concerning the prisoners. He knew the Roman law, that, if a jailer suffered his prisoner to escape, he was subject to his punishment. He, perhaps, also remembered the recent event mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the Acts, where we are informed that, when Peter had escaped from prison, Herod had commanded all the keepers to be put to death. He might at once, therefore, conclude that his doom would be still more terrible when *all* his prisoners were gone: and willing to save himself from all disgrace, and bring his troubles to a close at once, he draws out his sword, and is about to plunge it into his own heart.

Behold him, then, with only, as it were, one breath more between himself and that hell which he never thought of; when God interposes in his behalf: Paul's voice is heard to exclaim, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." What—all there, and the prison doors open, and their fetters off! The finger of God begins to be discerned; a sense of God creeps over his whole man; the sword drops out of his hand; conviction of another kind flashes upon his conscience now. Perhaps at this moment the thought of his unfitness to die, and to appear

before the mighty God of earthquakes, may have struck his heart ; the meditated crime of self-murder may have charged itself on his awakened conscience. It was the voice of Paul that first reached his ear, in the midst of these awful wonders—that Paul whom he had beaten the night before with many stripes. That voice would recall to his remembrance the judgment and salvation which it had doubtless preached to him, in the midst of all his cruelties : and therefore “calling for a light, he sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?”

Now, there were many things here, all concurring, which powerfully affected the jailer's mind. The wonderful earthquake which had shaken his strong house to its foundations, the discovery of the prison doors open, and the prospect of death, seem to have filled his mind with anguish and with horror. But these were only outward circumstances ; and, though powerfully concurring in the way of instruments, it was only by the special grace of God that they were made serviceable to his soul. Many people suffer huge afflictions, but never think of God in them, never realizing his hand at all in sending them, never seeking his help and his forgiveness at all under them ; and so their afflictions come to no blessed issue ; and, after they have been all endured, there remains the greatest still before them, when they rise up from the dead to be judged for all their actions, in all their days upon the earth.

It was not, indeed, till after the jailer had come to himself that he thinks about his soul, and sees the hand of God in the surrounding circumstances. And then, probably, his peculiar case, as having the Apostles in his custody—his guilt in having so ill-treated them the night before, even beyond the orders he had received—his unpreparedness for judgment—the discovery of his ruined state—the thought of the hell into which he might have plunged himself—the mercy of God in delivering him from self-murder—the remembrance, also, of the name of Jesus, which he had heard from the Apostles—all these things, in much confusion, were probably impressed upon him by the powerful Spirit of God.

If asked the true and very cause of this glorious awakening, we should say, the love of God to the man was the cause (this is the true cause of the awakening of every man) ; and the means which were used were, the bringing home to his soul such considerations as I have described to you. And, now then, observe : the man who had, a few hours before, thrust Paul and Silas into prison, and, perhaps, after repeating a prayer or two (for many ungodly people *say* their prayers, even if they never *pray*), he had laid himself down to rest, their enemy and their persecutor ; but now comes to them in terror and consternation, and falls down before their feet, craving their instruction and their help.

Now does not this remind you of a circumstance in the parable of the Ten Virgins ? The midnight cry was heard : what cry ? “The Bridegroom cometh : go ye forth to meet him.” Then all the virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. But some could not light theirs ; the wicks would not catch the flame ; do what they would, the lamps would not burn. Five of them had no oil in theirs. Doubtless they had said before, “I have a lamp, and I shall light it when occasion calls : religion is not for ostentation.” Now they cannot light them : they are in consternation, in confusion, and running to and fro.

The Bridegroom cometh; what can they do? What is their language? "Give us of your oil," they cry, "for our lamps are gone out." They turn beggars to those who had provided in proper time; beggars to those whom they had before despised as righteous over much; beggars to those who had forewarned them, that a form, without the power of godliness was nothing; that a lamp without oil in it was useless; that there could be no light without oil in the lamps. In the day of God's conviction, men are thankful for help from those whom they had reviled: and in the great day of all, when the door of repentance shall be for ever closed, the persecutors of the true Church of Jesus shall fall down before them, and be as ashes under the soles of their feet.

Now having thus shown you the manner of the jailer's awakening—that it was by the mighty power of God, through those awful considerations impressed upon his soul—I proceed to consider, secondly, **THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS AWAKENING**, in that earnest inquiry contained in the thirteenth verse: "Sirs," said he, "what must I do to be saved?"

Now the importance of this inquiry is immense; there is no calculating it, unless we could measure eternity, and weigh the power of God. But, in order that we may give it a thought, if, peradventure, some little impression of its importance may be made, I will endeavour to point out to you *what it is to be saved*.

When we say that it is an immense matter to be saved, it is as much as to admit that we are in a lost and ruined state at the outset. No one needs to be saved, or delivered, unless he is in a lost and ruined condition. All men are so: "the Son of Man came to seek and to save," not those who were in *danger* of being lost, but "those that *were* lost."

To be saved, then, in the first place, means, *to be delivered from all our sins*. In the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, the angel said, "They shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Sin is a dreadful evil, because it is the transgression of God's law made known to us. This is sin—any transgression of the law of God made known to us. This is hatred against God, and therefore hateful to him. The man who lives in sin, disregarding and disobeying some law of God, or all laws of God, not being swayed by it or them, does, in effect, declare that he loves his lust more than he loves his God: nay, he would, as far as himself is concerned, tear the sceptre from God's hand, and forbid him to govern men; he would, if possible, destroy him out of his own world: at least the declaration of his acts is this, "God shall not reign over me." Now, all the acts whereby this disposition has been shewn, are so many sins, and any one of which were sufficient to make a man appear in an appalling condition before any righteous judgment seat.

To be saved is *to be delivered from all the penalty of all these evil acts*. All the sins of the saved persons, whether they have been more or less, are all of them blotted out from the book of God's remembrance, so that God has not any recollection of them any longer. His language to them is this: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." Thus he speaks in Isaiah; and thus again: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, and I will return unto thee." And then, in the eighth chapter of the Epistle



to the Hebrews, he says, to those that turn to him—"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." It is no cunningly-devised fable, but a glorious truth, I utter (and may the grace of it penetrate your hearts and minds!) when I tell you, that to be saved, is to have all our sins entirely forgiven us, remitted, and done away for ever.

To be saved from our sins is also *to be placed in a capacity to overcome them*. The believer in Christ is placed in that capacity. "I can do all things," says St. Paul, "through Christ, who strengtheneth me." There is an express promise from the omnipotent God himself to his saved people: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace." It is difficult for a faithful person to speak on the subject of the salvation of man from the power of sin; and the difficulty lies in this—that salvation from the power of sin is not perfected in this life, as salvation from condemnation is. Hence we are afraid, lest persons should excuse sin on the one hand, or that those who are truly sensible of its evil, and mourn over it, should be discouraged and cast down, because they find it has some power left with respect to them.

But generally, I may say, that to be saved is *to be saved from the practice of sin*, as well as from the condemnation of it. And men have great need to be cautioned against the danger of Antinomianism, and be reminded, that when they come to Christ, and receive their pardon, and so enter into life, they have the promise of the Holy Spirit, who is omnipotent, to dwell in them, and to enable them, through the love of Christ, so to live upon the earth as to be witnesses for God; and so to glorify the name of their Father, by their life and manners amongst men. The question is not, Are you able so to live, being weak and fallen creatures, though forgiven? but the question is, Is the Holy Spirit able to cause us so to live? And he is promised to all whom the Lord shall call; and being promised, as all promises are made to faith, will yield his power in its fulness to our faith: in promise of that power, and through faith in the Holy Spirit's power, that power will be yielded to the man who hath that faith, and he will be able to overcome sin, and find himself saved from the power of it, as well as pardoned from the guilt of it.

Again: to be saved is *to be delivered from the devil*. It is no longer to be under his control. All men by nature are led captive by him at his will. It is true that he makes his harness wherewith he guides and governs men, to fit so exactly and so easy, that they are led about without being the least conscious that they are led, or feeling their chains at all. But the truth of his dominion is affirmed in Scripture; and hence he is called "the god of this world," "the prince of this world," "the ruler of the darkness of this world." To be saved, implies deliverance from his bondage. Those who are saved are made to be delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Again: to be saved is *to be delivered from the world*. The world holds sinners captive as well as the great enemy of souls. St. Paul says, in the epistle to the Ephesians, to those who have been quickened, that they had been "dead in trespasses and sins;" "Wherein," he says, "ye walked according to the course of this world"—that is, in the common, customary way of men, "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh

in the children of disobedience." Man by nature dares not do otherwise than fall in with the common notions of a ruined world: the fear of man is greater in him than the fear of God. The ridicule and the contempt of men are directed against those who would serve their God and follow wholly Him who died for them, and these bind men down in bondage, and they go one after another as sheep to the slaughter-house, or as the fool to the correction of the stocks. Salvation sets them free. To be saved is to be so far delivered from the fear of men, and from the world, as to reject their authority in religious things; to go forth to Jesus without the camp, bearing his reproach, and counting it greater treasures than any thing the world can give. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Again: to be saved is *to be saved from the curse of the Almighty*. Wherever the wicked man goes, the curse of God is upon him; whether he is in the field or in the market, whether he is at home or abroad, whether he is in the theatre or the church—wherever he is, there the curse of God is upon him. To be saved, is to be delivered from all this curse entirely. As the Apostle says, in the epistle to the Galatians, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us."

Again: to be saved is *to be delivered from hell*. I cannot, my brethren, put these things before you as I would wish to do; but pray that God may put them into your thoughts aright. You have the Bible, the book of the religion of our forefathers, the book of all the Christians in the world. The Book of God tells us of the horrible ending of a life of sin. You know it speaks of anguish unutterable and eternal; of the agonies of despair, of the torments of everlasting fire; of degradation and of companionship with every thing that is disagreeable and base. To be saved is to be delivered from all these.

But shall I stop here? This were something; to be saved from everlasting fire, without one drop of water to cool the tongue. Were the sinner to be blotted out of the book of creation, and cease to exist, instead of finding himself in never-ending torments—this were something. But to be saved is far more than this: it is to be brought from sin to holiness, from the curse to the blessing, from death to life, from unquietness to peace, from Satan to God. It is to be one of the redeemed, adopted, and beloved of God. It is to have the promises of mercy, and all of them in the whole Bible, our own. It is to have the companionship of the Spirit, to be pardoned, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is to find rest for the soul here, to die in peace, and have a foretaste of future and eternal blessedness. It is to have the almighty, all-wise, all-good God, our God for ever and ever, and our guide unto death. It is to pass from this vale of many tears to a land of bliss and immortality. It is to be for ever with the Lord; to be led in the right path, where are the chosen and beloved race. It is to meet the Judge's countenance with approbation. It is to have the mind filled with the most exalted thoughts of God and holiness. It is to hear the words, "Come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It is to enjoy the presence of God; to dwell in the beatific vision of God and the Lamb, and to know for ever, that God's grace, and goodness, and love, have all been magnified in the salvation of the multitudes of blessed immortals that surround the throne; and are prepared to enter together into

his new kingdom. 'This is to be saved; and hence we may indeed see, that the inquiry of the jailer of Philippi was incalculable in its importance.

But there is another feature in it worthy of your attention. This inquiry is not a vague and general one, as persons make general inquiries about religion, such as these: "Are there different degrees of glory in heaven? Will people know one another there?" These questions, vague questions, men ask, instead of asking this question, "What shall I do to be saved?" The matter is not taken up by them as a matter of life and death. And then observe further, that he is not asking about the souls of others now, but about his *own*: "What must *I* do to be saved?" He was convinced of his sinfulness, and of God's holiness; but how to reconcile himself to God he knew not. He has no doubt that, somehow or other, he is to save himself, and therefore does not say, "How can *I* be saved?" but, "What must *I* do to be saved?" As yet he had not learned the boundless riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Lord had inclined him to inquire, and the Lord had conducted him to right persons to satisfy his inquiry.

Now were such a question to be asked of many people, think you they would give the plain and simple answer which the Apostles gave? No; they would say something very different from what the Apostles said. But if a man like the jailer had come to you, in all the extremity of the deepest anguish, what answer should you have given him to his question, "How am I to be saved?" Perhaps you would have said, "You take these things too much to heart." What—take it too much to heart to be in the deepest trouble, when one knows not whether one is on the road to heaven or to hell! Can a man have too much concern about this—whether he is to be the companion of devils, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched; or whether he is to inherit God's glorious kingdom? Or, perhaps, you would have said, "If you wish to be saved, you must attend your church, and act justly in every thing." "But then, how am I to blot out my past sins?" the man would say, "each succeeding action is unable to answer for itself, much less to atone for the sins that have been committed." "O, you must be sorry for them, and not do the like again." "But I am a wretched and debased sinner, with more sins upon me than can be numbered." "O, God is very merciful, and you must trust in that." Thus many hard-hearted counsellors—not hard-hearted as respects intention towards man, but in reality so towards God—would have answered the poor self-condemned sinner, as if trying to quench the Spirit which God had in mercy given to the man, who might be brought to Christ, and saved for ever.

But let us observe now, THE ANSWER WHICH THE INSPIRED MESSENGERS GAVE TO THIS INQUIRING, AWAKENING, AND TEARFUL MAN. Surely now, we have an opportunity this moment of gaining some instruction: for here is an awakened man come to inquire for his salvation: a man truly in earnest. And the persons he inquired of are Paul and Silas, men full of the Holy Ghost, and of heavenly wisdom. And what is their answer to the man, who had the night before beaten them with stripes; and, within a few minutes, had held the most desperate purpose of self-destruction? "What," said he, "must I do to be saved?" And they say (for they both spoke in the same instant, as with one voice)—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." They

call away his attention at once from himself to Christ, to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. And judge what must have been his amazement and joy; for God made him believe what his servants testified of Christ; it was given to him to believe that the Lord Jesus was a glorious and all-sufficient Saviour, able to save, unto the very uttermost, those that turn unto their God by him; and that the peace derived from a reliance on his atonement, was ratified in heaven. He entered into a new life from that very hour.

And, now, observe, the jailer has found Jesus; and his terror is turned into joy. It is said "He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." And whereas, the night before, he would willingly see the disciples beaten, and fastened in the stocks, he now brings them forth and washes their stripes with his own hands, and was baptized, both he and all his house, straightway. It was the message of mercy which the Apostle uttered, which turned his sorrow into joy. Mark his great inquiry—"What must I do to be saved?" Mark their blessed answer—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And then, as the blessed fruits of his believing, his heart is filled with joy and with love to the brethren of the Lord; and he attended, with swift obedience, to the Lord's laws, and entered, by baptism, upon his Christian course, having all his household immediately baptized into the sacred name of Jesus. O, no injunction could have wrought on him so blessed a change as this one gracious word—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It is the message we are to bear to sinners, throughout this guilty and dying world: and those who believe us to be men of truth, the messengers of God, or who believe the message to be the message of his own mercy, sent down to their bleeding hearts, will be relieved by it as the jailer was relieved; and will put on beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. They will understand that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; and joy, and love, and obedience will be in them, the blessed fruits of their believing. Men will be enraged, they will rejoice; sinners will oppose, they will be at peace—at peace with their Maker, and thus be hidden, as in the secret of his pavilion, from the strife of tongues. Numbers around them may pass on in the mere formalities of religion, and nations may still rise against nations, and the blood of men flow under the scourge of an offended God; but they will still be at peace, knowing that all real evil has this law imposed upon it, that it may never inflict its venom on those of mankind who are united to the Son of God by faith.

Now this affords many subjects for the grateful contemplation of all believers in God. It contains, first, *a remarkable instance of free and rich mercy to a desperate sinner reduced to the last extremity.* It shews us that a person driven even to the very brink of suicide, may, by faith in Christ, be forgiven everything, and made a new creature, and turn his whole household into a family of religion, full of peace and joy in believing, to be waiting together for the glory that is hereafter to be revealed.

It affords, likewise, *an instructive instance of the mysteriousness of God's ways in the accomplishment of his purposes of mercy.* Paul and Silas were preaching at Philippi in faith; and here God, instead of giving them success in the way they would have expected, permitted them to be persecuted and cast



into prison but even there they trust in their God, and by these very means the greatest possible good is accomplished. The jailer's family, and possibly a great many of the prisoners, or all of them, are brought to the knowledge of salvation by the power of God. Now these instances of God's disappointing the designs of his servants that he may accomplish his own, are calculated to teach men to trust in him at all times, and to rely on him under every trial.

And this particular also may be observed as it respects the jailer—that *the salvation of God is as free as it is vast*. Many imagine that a long preparation is necessary before men may come to Christ, and be accepted in him; and that then a long time more must elapse before they may rejoice in him. But notwithstanding the greatness of this man's sin, the Apostles preached the same Gospel to him as they did to others; and he, being enabled to understand it, found rest and joy in Christ, the very day of his first awakening.

Observe also *the simplicity of the Gospel*. The inquirer comes: the Apostle does not ask him any questions as to what sort of life he had lived, nor as to the quantity of terror he had experienced then: no matter what his case or condition had been or was—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," was the Apostle's declaration. If any man or woman in this church, however bad his or her case had been, could be admitted to the presence of inspired men with this cry in heart and lip, "What shall I do to be saved?" the same answer would be given as was given to the jailer. O, the riches of divine grace, how great they are! How great in the sight of God must be the atonement which Jesus made, when he immediately forgives every creature in the world whose heart trusts in that atonement!

Another observation is, *that all the children of God are not awakened in the same way*. The jailer was exceedingly terrified; his family perhaps were not so. At all events, we read, in the same chapter, of Lydia, who seems under one sermon of the Apostle, to have had her heart opened by the Lord, to receive the glad tidings of salvation, without any description at all of antecedent terror. Some are brought to repose their souls in Christ without undergoing that alarm which others have experienced: but every believer, whatever his case may have been, is accepted and justified in Christ Jesus for this very reason, that the obedience unto death of the Son of God, deserves the salvation of all that should confide on them.

In this prison at Philippi, we see, in some respects, *a picture of the world*. This earth is a prison; the persons in it are condemned to die—yea, a thousand are led forth to execution daily. And though the unconverted man may not draw a sword to plunge it into his own heart, the sword of divine vengeance is unsheathed against him, and may pierce him at any moment. And whereas, while Paul and Silas were praising God for redemption, the earthquake shook the prison, and the fetters fell off the prisoners, we see, as it were, *a picture of the blessings of the Gospel*, whereby "the prisoner leaps to loose his chains," and those who are enabled to believe are emancipated from the bondage of sin, and brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God.

My brethren, my design in preaching this sermon, was to bring sinners unto Christ, that they might be blessed by resting upon him. And glad indeed should I be to hear that many, numbers, who have heard the message of the Apostles

to this jailer, should be brought to happiness and joy in God after many a weary conflict with the world upon the same ground as he was.

But there is one word more, in the way of especial admonition, that I would add. The Apostle says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*" And so when God sent his Gospel to Cornelius, it was to tell him "words whereby he," and not only he, but "all his house, should be saved." God delights to pour out his blessings largely upon households, as well as on individuals. O, it is a niggardly way of speaking of men, when they take that sentence from the Old Testament, which was meant to refer to something else, and says that God's way is to take one of a city and two of a family, and bring them unto Zion. Under the Gospel, we see that blessings are promised not to individuals only, but to households: not only was Cornelius to be saved, but all his house. And here the jailer is commanded to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he should be saved, *and his house.* And we read of the household of Stephanus, who were all addicted to the ministry of the saints: and we read of the house of Chloe. O, let us remember, how God under the Gospel blesses households together. You remember, in the first chapter of St. John, no sooner was Andrew awakened, than he goes and calls his brother Simon, and brings him to Christ; and they two are saved together. And when our Saviour findeth Philip, he has a friend whom he remembers, Nathaniel; he findeth Nathaniel, and though Nathaniel resists his arguments at the first, he cannot be put off so, but returns to him again, and at last prevails and brings him to Jesus; and they are saved together. O, if you believe in Jesus, and so enter into life, look for blessings, not upon yourself only, but upon your whole house. God is a God that maketh men to be of one mind in a house. Look for the salvation of all your household—every child in it, every dependant, every servant in it; look for this, because the atonement is so great, and because the grace of God is so large. And then God will recompense to you the charity himself infused, and recompense the expectation which the thought of himself has raised within you. And as in the case of the man who should harden his heart against the Gospel, it is likely that through him his little ones and all around him may perish with him and through him; so in the case of one that believes, and enters into life, he may not only save himself, but all his household with him, to the praise and glory of God.

## THE REASONABLENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

REV. G. LEGGE, A.M.

BRIDGE STREET CHAPEL, BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 30, 1834.

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“As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”  
1 PETER, ii. 2.

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WHEN we addressed you last from these words, it was our principal object to set before you the spirit in which “the word” should be received. All the vile affections and vices which were mentioned in the first verse, were denounced, not only on the ground of their own demerit, but as disqualifying for the reception of the truth, as rendering the Gospel of none effect, or of worse than none effect—the “savour of death unto death.” As we were exhorted to “lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,” because these were the expression of a depraved and diabolical nature, and because they are connected with misery and wretchedness, in time and in eternity; so did we exhort you, in connexion with the hearing of the word and the service of religion, to lay aside everything that had connexion with them; to lay aside the malice and spleen of the critic; to lay aside the evil eye and the envy of the censorious; to lay aside the cant and the disguise of the hypocrite. and, having laid aside all these, to receive as new-born babes the word—to receive with meekness, with a pure conscience, with faith unfeigned, the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.

This evening we would repeat the exhortation on which we insisted at the close of our former discourse, and urge you “as new-born babes” to “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,” because “the word” is the very element and the spirit of your life as Christians—the very element in which the Christian life breathes, the very food by which that life is supported, and without which the beauty of holiness withers, and the strength of righteousness droops, and the joys of salvation expire. We solicit your attention this evening, not to the general import of the words, or the general connexion of the words with the growth of the Christian; but we would request your attention to the phrase in connexion with the language in which the exhortation is couched—“the sincere milk of the word.” This we believe to be the right rendering of the original, following out an idiom which is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament: but literally the expression would be, “desire the sincere rational milk.” And accordingly certain commentators conceive that, as the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans, represented the exercise of devotion as a “reasonable,” or rational, “service,” so the Apostle Peter, as he had just before represented “the word” as “incorruptible seed,” represents it also as “rational,” or reasonable, “milk,” suited to “new-born babes.”

The Word of God is here called rational milk. The Word of God is rational on two grounds. It is so, first, because it develops a correspondence with reason; and, secondly, because it is suited to the spiritual, the immortal nature.

The Gospel, or the Word of God, I say, is rational *because it develops a correspondence with reason*. To the Jew it might be a stumbling-block, and to the Greek it might be foolishness, but it is not the less the wisdom and the power of God. It contains many things that pass our understanding, pass all finite understanding, for it speaks of the infinite. It contains many things above our reason, but none that are irrational. It contains a statement of things as they are in our world—of man as he is in the world; to which all experience gives confirmation. It offers to the view a prospect of things as they should be, and of man as he should be, to which our delighted hope would cling; and it reveals an expedient to bring about the change, from man as he is to man as he should be—a change which, though it could never enter into the heart of man to conceive, yet, being conceived, must be regarded as wise and reasonable, must fill him with wonder, love, and praise.

The Word of God announces the dread necessity in which human nature is, on account of which the whole creation groans and travails together in pain; and it meets that necessity in a manner the most wonderful and divine. It is, therefore, “rational,” inasmuch as it is surrounded by evidence to which reason sets its seal. It is “rational,” because its presentments, however stupendous and wonderful, do also in their design commend themselves to the approval of reason. It is “rational,” in fine, because reason must rejoice in its effects; and its effects are the very reverse of “earthly, sensual, and devilish.” Reason, I say, must rejoice in its effects—the filling the highest capacities with thought—the striking the finest chords of feeling—the multiplying the various sources of enjoyment, the purity of the heart, the rectitude of the mind, the well-being of the existence, the bliss of the individual, the bliss of the family, the bliss of the nation—the life, the death, the eternity—the realization of a paradise upon earth, and the assurance of a paradise in heaven. The Gospel is rational on these grounds—rational in its evidence, in its presentments, and in its results. Surely, then, it demands the homage of every understanding, and demands the affections of every heart. I ask, my dear hearers, whether it does not demand yours; and whether, if we have not yielded to the Word of God all the homage of the understanding, and all the affections of the heart, we are not of all men most irrational—whether we are not, emphatically, fools?

In the second place, the Word of God may be called “rational milk” for children, inasmuch as *it is suited to the nature of man*, suited to it as its element and its spirit—as indispensable to its well-being and its happiness—as that without which the reason and spirit of man must be destitute indeed. I am related to the material that is around me, and without some portion of its substance the material within me must die. I am related to the material, and without some relation to it, the social within me must die. I am related to the material, and without some knowledge of its results, the moral within me must die. I shall soon pass away from the material—I shall soon bid adieu to the social—I shall in a little while find myself amidst the realities of immortality; and O! if I should then find all those realities to be against me, and to be against me for ever, what will it avail at all that I had my share in the



material, that I was exulting in the social? What will it then avail me if the world is mine, seeing that I have lost my soul?

Now, the Gospel is related to me in the immortal—is related to my nature, to my reason, to my spirit, in contradistinction to my body. It is related to my spiritual nature—a relation apart from all that is social and terrestrial; and it will give me to have my being now in communion with God, and to have my dwelling now in the scenes of eternity, and to have my conversation, and my treasure, and my hope in heaven. It will create me a new creature in Christ Jesus, that I might hereafter become a creature of life, and love, and joy, in the presence of God. Such is the relation of the Gospel to my mind; this would be the effect of it on my nature; and I should pass from the unsatisfactory region in which I now am existing, to find myself in the presence of God, and in the joy of God.

And surely there is in this aspect of the Gospel something which would deeply affect our minds. If we pass into the other world without having received the Gospel into our minds, without having received the truth of God as part and parcel of our being, of our mental and immortal being—the effect would be, as I have already said, that we should find all the realities of the invisible world to be against us, and against us for ever. We shall go there, not only with the conviction that we have debased and vilified our nature, but with the conviction that we have refused a boon that would have restored our nature—that we have refused the overflowing love, forgiving kindness, the transforming grace of our Maker and Redeemer. We shall go into eternity with this conviction: say, then, whether eternity shall not be a horror and a curse.

I beseech you, my dear hearers, to think of this. I would draw your thoughts to the consideration of what you are—of what you are in yourselves, in your spiritual feelings—as the possessors of a soul that is of more worth than the great globe, and which has presented to it an inheritance of more value than all the stars; and I beseech you to look at the Word of God, at the truth of God, at the Gospel of Christ, as related to this being in the way we have stated—as suited to your nature in its present and its prospective state of being; so suited to it that, possessing it, nothing else can remain to be desired. I beseech you to think of God in his relation to your spiritual and immortal being; so suited to you that, if you receive his truth, you shall have, even now, the elements around you, in which you shall dwell for ever; as suited to you so that you shall have in your bosoms those reconcilings in which you are to glory and be gladdened for ever; as suited to you as guilty, inasmuch as it conveys to you the everlasting pardon of the everlasting God; as suited to you as sinful, inasmuch as it would transform you into temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in; as suited to you as miserable and destitute, inasmuch as it would impart everlasting consolation and joy; as suited to you as dying, inasmuch as it can impart a confidence that should triumph in death; as suited to you as immortals, inasmuch as it has in store a crown of righteousness, and mansions of felicity—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. O, that you would realize the thought of your own spiritual being, and that you would see the Gospel of Truth in that relation to the spiritual of which I have spoken; and then say whether it is not justly entitled to the appellation of “rational;” and say whether you, individually, will not henceforth desire it with your whole heart.

The exhortation before us has something still more specific. We are exhorted to "desire the sincere milk of the word." By "sincere," we are to understand pure, unmixed, unadulterated—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. There must be no admixture of men, for that would only serve to deteriorate the quality of the Word of God. They might make it palatable to depraved nature, but the end thereof would be death. It is strange to consider how the truth of God has been perverted and adulterated in all ages. The primitive revelation that was given to man, was very speedily lost in ridiculous fable or superstitious dreams. The system of Judaism, the religion of Moses, was very soon secularized in all its aspects, and made void by the traditions of men. And no sooner was the economy of the Gospel introduced, than it was assailed by a torrent of fanaticism and delusion: on the one hand, Jewish bigotry would array Christianity in the pomp of Moses; and, on the other hand, Gentile philosophy would have it wear the garb of the schools. It is melancholy to think with what "vain babblings" the Church was invaded in the earliest times, and how early the Apostle's words were realized, that there were many Antichrists in the world. Against Jewish teachers and Gentile innovators, a considerable portion of the Epistles are directed; and, perhaps, we are not wrong in concluding, that against them the Apostle Peter uttered the words of the text—"As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." "If you observe the ritual of Moses, Christ will be to you of none effect; if you yield to the philosophy, falsely so called, you have denied the faith. You must abide by the simple testimony we have given you; you must walk in the ordained and commanded path, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left."

Taking the exhortation in this view, we apprehend it is scarcely less important in the present day than it was in the days of the Apostle. For in how many ways is the truth of Christianity perverted! How many forms of error has heresy assumed! How important is the injunction, "Take heed *what* ye hear!" On the one hand, truth has been mixed up with rites and ceremonies, and all that amalgamates with the world; and on the other hand, it has been stripped almost of its native comeliness, and exhibited in deformity. *Here* we have the dry bones of Socinianism, and *there* the foul monstrosities of the Antinomians. In *this* place the people are frozen by the chill influence of the neologic infidelity, and in the *other* place they are misled by the rabid frenzy of fanatical extravagance. On every side error is to be guarded against; and it is the part of him who would follow the Scriptures to abide by them. Let us endeavour, in these circumstances, to attend to the admonition of the Apostle—let us "cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart." Let us search the Scriptures, knowing that we have in them eternal life. Let us read the precious words that have come out of the Saviour's lips. Let us attend to the Apostle when he declares that he "would know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified:" and let us rejoice with the Apostle John, when he declared "the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son." In this manner we shall realize all the objects of the Gospel: we shall be enabled to see in it and in its development the glory of God in the highest, in the richest of the Redeemer's love; and we shall realize in ourselves, by blessed experience "the peace which passeth understanding," and "good-will to the children of men."

But perhaps the exhortation to “desire the sincere milk of the word” may refer, not merely to the admixture of error and heresy, but to the introduction into the Gospel of foreign matter—to the introduction into its exhibitions of something altogether disconnected with it—for instance, the introduction of metaphysical subtilities or rhetorical conceits. There is no doubt that the existence of these must be prejudicial in the exhibition of the truth, and the desire of this must disqualify for the reception of the truth. We would not say that embellishments or developments are in themselves wrong; but we would say that if they are desired and sought after for their own sakes, they are indeed to be worse than condemned. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; and if any man hear, let him listen as in the presence of God. Embellishments of truth, and eloquence in connexion with the truth, when sought for on their own account, are indeed preposterous and absurd. Embellishment of that whose beauty is supreme! What can be more preposterous? Eloquence to aggrandize eternity! How atrocious an absurdity! To seek and cull the flowers of fancy and genius when the man stands on the brink of a precipice! What can more emphatically prove the individual a fool? Surely these things can never be sought after when the truth is felt in its native beauty, and when eternity is felt in its awful grandeur. And yet in contemplation of the supreme beauty of truth, its lovely hues may spread themselves before the eye, and a flood of natural eloquence may pour from the lips to dazzle and overwhelm; but still the great object is to *feel* the truth: and if we do feel it, we shall speak of the oracles of God, and shall listen to them, as in the presence of the Eternal.

My Christian friends, it is of great importance that we lay these things to heart. We stand on the verge of eternity, and the eye of the Omnipotent is upon us. We shall soon appear before the great white throne, and stand before our Judge. How should we desire that we may obtain that which can alone render us acceptable in his presence, which can alone qualify us for the destinies of eternity. We fear that there is a strong propensity in those who preach the Word of God, and in those who hear, to desire something besides the sincere and the unadulterated truth: but, surely, miserable are they who seek in the annunciations of truth, anything but the honour of their Master, and the salvation of souls. Miserable must he be regarded who would set forth the powers of his own genius, when he is called to set forth, and to commend to the approval of men, the Lord Jesus Christ. Miserable must he be who, when he is called to sound the alarm in the ears of men, should seek to amuse them with sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. And miserable must they be who will not receive the truth because there is some peculiarity about the speaker, or something that he disrelishes in the mode in which the truth is presented. Every voice has its own tone, every mind has its own character; and the truth of God must be, of course, expressed in the individual's own tones, and must assume something of the form of the individual's own mind. And thus where we have the sweet singer of Israel, and the lofty measures of Isaiah, we have also the herdsman of Tekoah: thus we have the same truth expressed in the diversity of taste and talent displayed in the writings of Peter and Paul. It is our duty to receive the truth, and to look at it, in whatever form it comes to our eye and to our mind. And I say again, miserable are they who refuse the truth, who will not

receive it, because, on the one hand, the tones in which it is expressed grate harshly on the ear, or because, on the other hand, the tones are too soft. Miserable are they who will refuse the truth because they do not like the earthly vessel in which it is contained and presented to them. Miserable is it to refuse to profit by a sermon because there is too much of this doctrine, or too little of that doctrine; because there is a destitution of that fancy and intellectualism which they have been accustomed to approve—or because there is too much of these. Let us seek to listen to the word, desiring to hear the voice of God, to feel as in the presence of the Eternal; and then indeed we shall be blessed. It is the truth, and nothing but the truth in its simple form, that alone can regenerate the soul, that alone can produce the growth of the spiritual man, that alone can exhibit the themes of eternity.

Let us inquire whether or not we have received the truth in the love of it—whether we have desired the sincere unadulterated truth. Let us inquire whether we rejoice in it, and whether we act on the principles it enjoins. Many of us, perhaps all, have expressed an approval of the truth, and a desire to disseminate the truth, and during the week gone by many of us have been full of excitement in the diffusion of the truth. What, if after all, the truth has no power in our own minds, in our own hearts! What, if after we have been engaged in diffusing the Gospel, we ourselves should be cast away! Many of you have been saying, perhaps, “Come, see our zeal for the Lord;” while, Jehu-like, you have not been walking in the way of the Lord at all. How absurd, how preposterous, how irrational, is it that we should seem to take an interest in the concerns of others, while we are so regardless of our own! What can be more absurd, or more irrational, than to seek to send the Gospel to all the ends of the earth, while we ourselves neglect the great salvation; to seek that others should receive the pearl of great price, while we trample it under our feet; to seek that others may appreciate the glory of the Gospel, while we make light of it by our indifference from day to day! What can be more absurd or more preposterous?

I beseech you examine yourselves. Let us all examine ourselves, and see what has been the source of our conduct—what has been the motive that has actuated us. Let us take heed lest, a promise being left us of entering in, any of us should seem to come short of it. There were builders of the ark who sunk beneath the billows on which it rose: there were builders of the temple who never offered any sacrifice there. Let us fear, lest after having taken an interest in the eternal happiness of others, we ourselves should not attain it, but be cast into hell with a lie in our right-hand! I beseech you to lay these things to heart—that you desire the truth as the only thing that can support you in time, and that can carry you in triumph and exultation into the abodes of glory.



## THE OMNISCIENCE OF THE DEITY.

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REV. T. DALE, A.M.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHAPEL, DENMARK HILL, NOVEMBER 16, 1834.

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"Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?"—PROVERBS, xv. 11.

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AMONG the many internal evidences—those, I mean, arising out of the tenor and tendency of the Sacred Oracles themselves—that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, one of the most striking, at first sight perhaps, when carefully pondered and minutely analyzed—one of the most convincing, even after mature reflection, will be found in the immensity of the power that might be brought to bear on the whole human race by the complete and general application even of a single text. That from which I am about to address you, for example, if first carried home to every human heart, and then followed out to its obvious and palpable results by all who acknowledge it, would of itself avail, among those who are called Christians, to the total extinction of all wickedness, and even to the encouragement and ascendancy of all true religion: for it contains, **first**, an assertion; **secondly**, an inference (and little more, we repeat, is needed to the moral renovation of the whole nominal Church) that those who in theory admit the one, should in practice apply the other. If we are not prepared to gainsay the assertion that "hell and destruction are before the Lord," how can we avoid or parry the home-thrust conveyed to each of our bosoms in the inference—"how much more then the hearts of the children of men?" And wherein would it fall short of practical insanity, were one amongst us to insinuate or imply, that in his heart were mazes of deceitfulness so complicated and multiplied, that the All-detecting could pass by the lurking-places of so gloomy a security—that the glance of the All-beholding could not pervade and inundate them with light?

The assertion once rightly admitted, then, and the inference once duly applied, who would dare to regard iniquity in his heart, which he knew the Lord searched, any more than to whisper it with his lips with an utterance which he knew the Lord could hear? Who would dare to live without preparation of heart for that searching and decisive judgment which shall bring to trial, in presence of the assembled universe, every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil?

The root of all practical evil is practical unbelief on our part, and patient long-suffering upon God's: for such is the deceitfulness of men, that unbelief arises out of that very long-suffering: and here is the proof—"Because sentence against an evil world is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

Let us, however, beloved, steadily consider the assertion of the text, that we may be the more firmly disposed, and the more resolutely determined, to apply the inference. Let us consider what is now before the Lord, as it regards our own hearts, that we may anticipate what will be before him in that hour when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and every one shall be judged according to his work. In order to do this effectually, we will examine, first, the extent and exercise of God's divine omniscience in the abstract ; " Hell and destruction are before the Lord : " next, the extent and exercise of it in that relation which personally concerns ourselves ; " How much more then the hearts of the children of men : " and finally we will press home the subject in a way of moral conviction—in a way of solemn admonition—in a way of consolation and encouragement. And may the Spirit of God now speak by us, and now speak to you : may it be His word which is uttered by my lips, and engraven on your hearts, through Jesus Christ.

" Hell and destruction are before the Lord." Here there can be no doubt that the immediate reference of the writer was to God the Father, who had revealed himself to Israel by the name here employed, of Jehovah, the Lord. Hence, as from many other passages in the Old Testament, we derive, on comparing them with the Scriptures of the New, an incidental evidence to the divine nature of our blessed Lord ; an evidence of which it is proper to make specific mention, because it is incidental. All will admit that, if the Son of God can be demonstrated, in common with the Father, to exercise the essential attribute of omniscience—that of seeing that which is invisible—to exercise it in the abstract both with respect to hell and destruction, and in the especial influence that rises in the heart of every man ; it will be scarcely possible, and certainly most irrational, to impeach or invalidate the conclusion, that he is partaker of the divine nature : for the divine nature is none other than a combination of divine attributes, all of such a description, so connected and combined, that each is necessary, not only to the exercise, but to the existence of the others ; and consequently, he who possesses any, must, of necessity, be possessed of all. Now the appropriate prerogative of omniscience, as in the first clause of our text, " Hell and destruction are before the Lord," was evidently assumed and exercised by Jesus after his resurrection : " I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death : " while he proved, during his continuance in the body, both that he knew the thoughts and regarded the hearts. The explanation and reconciliation of which is simply (and the observation of the fact is indispensably important to those who have an interest in the encouragement to be deduced therefrom) that the attributes of God towards us are all practically invested in, and manifested by Christ ; that to use the Apostle's own words, he is to us, " the power of God and the wisdom of God ; " that all things are committed to him in heaven and earth ; that he is " head over all things to his Church," and able, in consequence, to do " exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think," for all such as come to God by him. We know therefore (and who shall estimate, in a course controlled indeed by Omnipotence, yet chequered by sin and encompassed by infirmity—who shall estimate the value of such knowledge?) that " he is not one who is not touched with the

feeling of our infirmities," but one "who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" one that having himself suffered, "he is able to succour them that are tempted." It is such an one of whom we say, that by him the Father administereth the government of the universe—by him he will doom to destruction hereafter. "Hell and destruction are before the Lord."

The idea conveyed by the words, "hell and destruction," in their union with each other in the Old Testament, as well as by the equivalent expression, "death and hell," in the New, seems to include, first, the grave (here termed "hell,") which is the receptacle of the dissolved and dismantled body; and, next, that unknown and undefined region, which is the dwelling of disembodied souls; especially of that part of it here denominated "destruction," where impenitent and unpardoned souls are "reserved unto chains and darkness for ever." And it is invested to our apprehension with the greater awfulness, because, though we must all inhabit it, there is yet a veil of mystery drawn across it, which human eye would in vain attempt to penetrate.

A kindred phrase is employed by the writer of the book of Job, in reference to the all-discerning eye of God: "Hell is naked before thee, and destruction hath no covering." When earth has returned to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, every particle of the body that was once instinct with the breath of life, and of which the flexible and elastic members acted out the volitions of the intelligent mind within, under whatever form it may appear to be exhibited, and with whatever foreign substances incorporated, every particle has its distinct memorial in the all-recording mind, and will in the appointed time be recalled by the all-constraining voice. A lively image of this is presented by the prophet Ezekiel. He looked abroad upon a spacious valley, spread with bones that were very dry; but when he prophesied, according to the Word of God, not only bone came to bone, but "the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above." We need not, therefore, to ask the question of the fool, "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?" either as disputing the certainty of the fact, or as doubting the practicability of the process. For the fact, it is evident that "He who raised up Christ from the dead," is able also "to quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you:" for the process, we may surely leave what he has not thought proper to reveal, with implicit confidence to Him who, possessing the creative power, can hardly be denied that of recalling and remodelling, after the counsel of his own will, that which once existed by the command of his own word.

"*Hell* is naked before him:" the grave has for him no abode. As without Him there falls not a hair from the head of the living, so without him there cannot be absorbed or annihilated a particle of the dead; but he is for ever working by a process inscrutable to us, to bring out of corruption incorruption, power out of weakness, and out of the natural a spiritual body. There is a natural body: it is that which we "bury away," like Abraham, "out of our sight," though it was once the tenement and the tabernacle of the soul we loved best on earth. There is a spiritual body also: it is like that which Jesus appeared in after his own resurrection, none doubting or questioning that he who thus appeared was Jesus; and in which we shall stand before his throne, when we shall be made like unto his glorious body.

Meantime, as hell so *destruction* is before the Lord. As hell is naked, so

destruction is naked before the Lord. His eye shall look on the disembodied spirit, whether it abide in the immediate contemplation of Jesus, and in a state of joyful, because certain expectation, until the perfect consummation and bliss both of body and soul which awaits it on its re-union with the flesh, or whether (and to that the text seems to point) it be excluded from the expectation of the just, and be shut up in outer darkness to the judgment of the great day; the dreadfulness of which is expressed to the human imagination under "the worm that dieth not," and "the fire that is not quenched," and the utterance of unavailing regrets which are delineated to mortal apprehension, under the fearful imagery of "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

Contemplated in any aspect, the personal application of our text is momentous beyond all estimate. If, of the millions upon millions who have crowded in succession the stage of existence, and vanished from it like motes in the sun-beam, or bubbles that mingle in the waves—if of those there is not one that is not present to the divine eye through all ages, and existent to all ages in the purposes of God; if the spirit, banished for ever from among men, is rejoicing in the porch of Paradise, or trembling on the threshold of that dark abode which is destined for its eternal prison; if God's mighty power is throughout all time steadily, though secretly, continuing a process by which the body that was once "the instrument of unrighteousness unto sin" shall again become "the instrument of righteousness unto God," how much more are the hearts of the children of men before him! Yes, beloved brethren, our own heart—the heart of every one before us, whose eternal destiny is now, to his own apprehension in suspense, knows this, at least, that he must either be an heir of Christian hope, a partaker of Christ's kingdom, or (which may God's mercy forbid) an outcast from his presence, a prisoner in that dungeon which hope never can enter. How, then, should we be stirred up by the conviction that God is looking on us, though we may look not on ourselves! Is not the fact that "all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," enough to suggest the question, and to compel the answer—"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself in judgment before the high God?" Is it not enough to direct us, in such an examination, to principles strictly scriptural, when we read that the ways of a man are indeed "right in his own sight," but "the Lord trieth the heart?" And must we not acquiesce in the propriety, and in the sole sufficiency of the prophet's reference, which applies as much to those who judge of themselves, as to those who judge of others: "To the law and to the testimony: if we judge not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us?"

Little, however, will be done, unless by God's help we can bring the acknowledgment closely home to the hearts and the consciences of men. For the *general* confession is that which all will utter—the *general* supplication is that which all will prefer; and it is easy (alas, for the deceitful heart of man!) it is easy and common to say to the Almighty, in that which is the semblance—we might almost term it, the mockery—of prayer, "Search thou my heart," and to say it without a consciousness of hypocrisy; while yet we wince like the galled jade if man attempt to search it, and turn with aversion from him who would supply a standard by which we may search it for ourselves.



Braving, however, all risks, and fearless of being reckoned an enemy, if hostility must come by the declaration of the truth, we who are ministers of Christ, and watch for souls as those who must give an account—we say to the man who is bent on the acquirement of wealth, and who is caught in the snare of that covetousness which is idolatry, Remember that thine heart is open before God, and that the eyes of God are on the truth. He sees and notes which you love best, your desire or himself; and according to your preference, so is your god; where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And you may test yourselves by this: if, as you rise early, the mind, instead of first springing after God, enters upon conscious existence with forming schemes of personal advantage and aggrandizement; if, as you late take rest, the eyes habitually close, whilst the mind, whose last waking thought ought to be of Christ, is ruminating on the profits, and the schemes, and the speculations of the day; if, having food and raiment, and enjoined therewith to be content, your homes become the abodes of carefulness, either by reason of anxiety for the future, or dissatisfaction of the past—either because you have less than others, or desire to have more than they; even if the Sabbath is encumbered by thoughts and plans of worldly policy, and the genuine, though unuttered language of the heart (and the heart's language is the same in every age) “When will the Sabbath be gone that we may sell again?”—if commercial speculation and adventure, watching for a tide in the affairs of men, and attempting to turn that which should refresh others into your own channel, for the increased facility of amassing wealth; if this be the continual mainspring of action—if this be the power that daily sets in motion the machinery of the heart, then we hesitate not to say, that in every fibre of that heart, naked to the eye of Omniscience, are developed the spots and the symptoms of a plague which, if unheeded and neglected, must be inevitably fatal to the soul. For not only is “the love of money the root of evil,” but God says *all* evil, in the conception as well as in the execution of which it is the root. “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” When, therefore, you are eager in the pursuit of wealth—when you are bold and enterprising in adventure—when you are flushed with success—when, on account of that very success, you are flattered, and applauded, and approved by men—stop short, and remember this one thing—“Man judgeth by outward appearance, but the Lord trieth the heart.”

But those who are ascending the ladder that leads to opulence, those who are actively engaged in commercial or professional pursuits, will obviously form but a portion, and a small portion, of a mixed congregation: and therefore we must say also to the lover of pleasure, whatever form it may assume, whether it meet us under the various aspects of animal indulgence, or in the more specious and seductive garb of a thirst after literary distinction, or a passionate devotion to the fine arts: and we must say to the lover of distinction, whether aspiring to write his history in the page of time, or actuated only by that low ambition which heeds not how contracted the circle is of which it is the centre: and we must say to the lover of self-indulgence—whether in the pursuits of science, or that unmanly indolence which is the delight of the vacant mind—and whether it be in the halls of mansions, or the saloons of palaces, or amidst those miniatures of Pandemonium, those outlets of the infernal pit, re-echoing the blasphem-

mies of hell, which demonstrate the sensual and demoralizing condition of a land that is called Christian, draining, like so many vampires, the life's-blood of our country, and which, unless God put forth his arm, will become the hot-bed of every passion, and the nursery of every crime: we say to the lovers of pleasure, whether high or low, rich or poor, assume whatever form, conceal itself under whatever disguise it may—Thy heart is before God. He knoweth what his own place therein is, as well as thou knowest what it ought to be; and if thou credit his own testimony, that "whosoever liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth," how can he who dieth in what men call pleasure expect to live after he is dead—to live in that place for which alone life is worth possessing, the life which is "hid with Christ in God?" for be assured of this, (and it applies under one form or another to us all, even if we are not lovers of pleasure, or seekers after wealth,) it is comparatively of little moment where we place God, if we do not place him first. He will never give his glory to another: he will never condescend to hold the second place in the heart. This man knows, and the knowledge of it is one cause which drives him from the hearing of the word; and, if he enters into the sanctuary, it even there blinds his eyes that he may not see, and steels and stupifies his heart that he cannot feel or understand.

Whoever, then, strives to misunderstand the word, because comprehension is conviction, and whoever struggles to forget the word, because remembrance is reproof, he may be assured that he has an idol in his heart which tempts him to err, and constrains him to forget his God; and, though there may be comparative blamelessness in the life, iniquity is regarded in the heart. Remember, then, that the great point, whether your present state is a state of salvation or not, depends upon the answer to a single question: answer it, therefore, brethren, as promptly as you can, and as faithfully as you dare: Am I, or am I not, a lover of pleasure; and not of pleasure only, but of any earthly object, more than a lover of God? If I seem not so in my actions, am I in my heart? for the outward act is that of which man takes cognizance; but the heart is before God, and it will be before God when it has ceased to beat in this tabernacle of clay.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to remind the hypocrite—the deliberate and conscious hypocrite—the man with whom an exact and ostentatious performance of all religious duties is, in truth, the cloak of licentiousness; or, who dares to make the profession of godliness subservient to views of selfish principle and secular interest—it is scarcely necessary to remind such a man, that his heart also is before God; that, to the divine view, and in the divine purpose, his covering of dust is already stripped off, and his refuge of lies already pierced through and through. It is needless to remind him of this, for he knows it well; and it is amongst the most hideous and appalling sins of hypocrisy—that sin of sins—that it offers a pointed insult to the Majesty of heaven. It is the sale of the heavenly birth-right, by one who is conscious of its value, for a mess of pottage. It is the deliberate barter of hope and immortality for the breath that is in man, and the short-lived bubble of reputation and credit. The hypocrite may be successful in over-reaching others; but let him know this—the person whom he most flagrantly and fatally deceives, is himself.

We will not, however, dwell on a class of transgressors, in this place, we hope, without a single representative, and which even the meek and lowly Jesus

addressed in terms of peculiar and unparalleled reprobation, when he demanded of them, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" We will rather direct our last warning to a much more frequent, but (blessed be God!) a much more hopeful character, and of which there may be some example among ourselves: I mean the undecided and unstable man; the man whose purpose is all for Christ to-day—to-morrow, all for the world; who thinks, while he is listening to the word of God's truth, the promises of mercy, the denunciation of God's wrath, he will never again doubt or disobey that word, never again trifle with those mercies, never again lose his hold of those promises; but who relaxes into his former state of indifference so soon as he inhales the corrupt atmosphere of the world. Let him, whose conscience has said to him while I am speaking, "Thou art the man;" let him remember—not only to-day, while he is reminded of the fact by all around him, but to-morrow also, when all will conspire to efface the remembrance, that his heart is before God. He sees, not only the impression made here, but he beholds that by which it is effaced elsewhere. And does it not, think you, enhance the guilt of every forgetful hearer, that the very wish is found sufficient to obliterate the most solemn characters, and one struggle strong enough to stifle in the birth, the most salutary convictions of sin? Yes, that the very aspect and vapour of the world will condense itself into a wall of partition between the sinner and his God! If, then, we would not add insult to ingratitude, and aggravate rebellion by contempt, we ought at least to seek something in exchange for the "exceeding great and precious promises," which is not altogether inadequate to their value: but O, brethren, if he waits till such could be found, we remind him, in the mean time, that his heart is before the Lord.

Here, however, we gladly reverse the picture; for it is not in the way of admonition alone that we would apply this memorable passage. There are some here, (blessed be God!) and, we trust, no small proportion, to whom it may be pressed home in the way of comfort and encouragement—some, whose only safeguard under all dangers, whose most effectual support under all sorrows, whose unfailing refuge under all trials of life, has been, and will be, imbued with the conviction, "Thou, God, seest me. Lord Jesus, thou knowest what is in man's heart—thou knowest what is in my heart—thou knowest that I love thee." Yes, brethren, when we cannot do what we would—when we are beguiled by the artifices of Satan, or depressed by the infirmities of the flesh, or surprised by the temptations of the world into doing what we would not—when, though we would do good, evil is present with us—when the motions of sin struggle powerfully in the members, and seem as if they were again bringing us into captivity to the law of sin and death—when even the means of grace seem to fail, and the channel of mercy seems to run dry, and we return from the reading of the Scriptures apparently without the fruit—when we go mourning in the bitterness of the soul, and walking in darkness, and seeing no light, we can yet support ourselves, and stay ourselves on the remembrance, "Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?" He knows that we would serve him if we could, though we cannot serve him as we would. He knows that it is no more we that do it, but sin that dwelleth in us. He sees that the seed of grace is still in that heart which he has made honest and good,

and will yet bring forth fruit, to his glory and our own salvation. He knows there is still the vital principle latent; and to the enemy who would malignantly say, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" his answer is—to him of disappointment, but to us of peace—"Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

We know, indeed, and we knew from the beginning, concerning the heart, that all its depths of wickedness God could fathom, all its mazes of deceitfulness God could track: for when he himself asks, "Who then can know it?" he answers, "I, the Lord, search the heart." But it is from this very knowledge that our confidence is derived. He who loved us when sin seemed to reign without a rival, surely will not cease to love us now that sin has been displaced by himself. He who loved us when he first gave repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, surely will not cease to love us now that he hath taught us to repel it. While he "knoweth our infirmities," he "remembereth that we are dust;" "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

Having, then, a High-priest over the house of God, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and who knows them, let us, sinners though we are, and as sinners, let us seek and find continually access to the throne of grace. Let our only concern be to draw nigh and to keep close to Christ. Let the Word of God, though it be "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," become to us also, "the word of the Spirit," "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." And while we remember with reverence and with awe, that "hell and destruction are before the Lord," that there is no creature who is not manifest in his sight, but all things are "naked and open in the sight of Him with whom we have to do," let us rejoice and give thanks that we have to do with One who, "though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered," and who, having by himself purged our sins, is able "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him;" for he hath wrested the victory from hell, and delivered the captives from destruction. Nor ought his servants to apprehend, while he keeps the keys of hell and death; and how long he will keep them he hath told us—"Behold I am alive for evermore. Amen."

While, then, hell is naked before Christ Jesus, and while destruction hath no covering, never shall one of the children of men be forgotten in the one, or engulfed in the other, whose heart he knows, and that, notwithstanding all its imperfections, and all its errors and infirmities, it is (for he hath made it so) it is all his own; and God grant that each of you may rise triumphantly from the grave, and escape the abyss of destruction by hearkening in his strength to the voice that calls to you as to children; and not only in general terms, as a body bearing the name of Christ, but that calls as to each one of you, each one as though he were "a dear son and a pleasant child"—one over whom the Father's bowels are yearning, and to whom the Redeemer is waiting to be gracious—that calls, I say, to each one of you, "My son, O my son, give me thy heart."



## THE CAUSE AND DESIGN OF AFFLICTION.

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"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."—**JEREMIAH, xxxi. 18—20.**

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**EPHRAIM** was not a single person, but a tribe of the Jewish nation. The families of that tribe had grievously departed from God by idolatrous practices: they were threatened therefore with the captivity of Syria. It was foreseen that some of them would repent, that they would form just views of their afflictions, and would return to God, and he would have mercy upon them, and would recover them to their own land, or encompass them with his favour there, preparatory to his favour for ever. Now all this is individualized in the passage that I have read: it is represented as the affliction, the repentance, and recovery to the favour of God, of a single man; and that not merely to render it more striking, but to render it more easy of application: for the passage is universally applicable to every individual of the human race in a degree, and in its fulness to every individual of the people of God. It furnishes us for this purpose with two general observations, to discuss and to enforce before you.

The first is, **THAT GOD IS TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE AUTHOR AND DISPENSER OF ALL AFFLICTIONS.** Thus Ephraim was to be brought to recognize, and to say in captivity, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised." God is the Author of all the causes of affliction that are in the world: they were not the first work of his hand, but demanded afterwards by his justice for the sin of man. He consented to all those disarrangements of the creation that inflict numberless ills and distresses, that he might have materials ever at hand for the affliction of the children of men for sin, in a state of probation, and for urging them to use the means provided for their recovery. He is the Author of that general dispensation of affliction under which all our race are born: he is the Author of those particular appointments and operations—all those evil effects which follow from certain sinful courses, which necessarily are fastened to them as by an adamant chain, so that sorrow from sin no power can separate. These are the result of his appointment, and own him for their Author. The particular evil or

evils in any one's lot, have been inserted there under his superintendence; they are the mixture of God, and were according to his prescription; they are a texture woven according to the pattern in his own mind. He dispenses all the particular causes of affliction, in their movements and operations: they are all his servants, and obey his orders, however complicated their movements, however long or short the series in which they are connected with each other, and made dependent the one upon the other: they are all a large army, whose movements, individually and collectively, are according to his plans and his will.

This truth approves itself to our *reason*. It follows from the fact of his sustaining care over the world, as necessary for its provision: for all created things depend on him; and therefore, if your afflictions came from the wings of the wind, they could not move without him; if they came from your fellow-creatures, in him they all live, and move, and have their being; he is privy to every purpose of their mind, and every operation of their hand, and therefore they could do nothing without his permission. Whatever be the immediate cause of your afflictions, however dependent they may be on another, and that upon another, you must go through the whole series of second causes, till you come to that without which not one of them could act, and which sets all in motion—the will of the Great God. So that God is ever present with us by his will, in the operations which he permits.

This truth is further confirmed by the considerations of *the meritorious cause of affliction*, which is *sin*. For sin is originally committed against God: it violates his law, contemns his authority, and despises alike his favour and his frown. Who, then, is to dispense affliction as the punishment of sin, but He who is its supreme avenger? Who shall take God's place in punishing sin by affliction, since against him it is committed, and from him demands the vengeance? Moreover he is the Judge of the whole world: that is his character: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Now, among men, and under a human government, no private individual is allowed to take the law in his own hands; the judge must inflict the punishment: who then shall ultimately superintend the punishment of sin by affliction, but the Great Judge of all?

This is a truth, which when once confirmed by our reason, is recognized throughout Scripture. There you find that the afflictions of the children of men are dispensed to them in number and in measure. Job says of his afflictions to the Almighty, "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me:" he not only appoints it, but he performs it: "and many such things are with him." The Apostle blames the Corinthians for their abuse of the sacramental table. he calls it, "eating and drinking unworthily." What he there says, does not apply to any among us; he alludes to a practice which is not found amongst us: therefore the condemnation in that chapter need not terrify weak minds. He refers there to receiving the sacrament in a drunken and disorderly manner: "For which cause," says he, "many are weak, and many are sick, and some have fallen asleep, and are dead." He alludes there to the bodily plagues and afflictions, which issued in the death of some. Now, from whatever quarter those plagues, or sicknesses, or deaths came, it is evident they were sent by God, because they were a punishment for an offence peculiarly against him. And even of the Saviour himself, it is said in prophecy, "It pleased the Lord to

bruise him ; he hath put him to grief." What ! did not the Jews put him to grief ? Was it not Pilate and the Romans that bruised him, by the scourge, by compelling him to bear his cross, by nailing him to it, by piercing his side ? But what did our Lord himself say to Pilate, proclaiming his power over him ? "Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee of my Father." And what did Peter and the Apostles say of the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish rulers, the priests and the scribes ? They were gathered together, at the crucifixion of Christ, to do "what the counsel and hand-writing of God had before determined to be done." And therefore "it pleased the Father to bruise him ;" he "put him to grief," and made "his soul an offering for sin." And but for the hand that God had in his sufferings, exacting the sacrifice of his death, it would have had no efficacy as an atonement.

Away, then, with the Manichean heresy, which ascribes all the affliction in the world to an evil principle, equal in power to God, and opposing his will. They do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor ever attending to the dictates of sound reason. For how can there be two supreme wills ? If there be one supreme will, there can be no other equal to it. How can there be two infinite beings ? If there be one infinite being in every place, what room can there be for another ? How could two opposite beings, and of opposite characters, agree in the construction of this world, so as that the perfectly good being should consent to so much evil, and the perfectly evil being to so much good ? It is plain that the evil principle, which is Satan, is an inferior agent ; otherwise the world would be deluged with evil, and otherwise evil would not have been overruled, as we see it to have been in so many cases, for the accomplishment of important purposes in the fulfilment of divine prediction.

Away, then, with the Stoical hypothesis, that there is no difference in pain or pleasure but what is arbitrary, or what we choose to make ourselves. What if a few individuals, under the pride of philosophy, attained to an insensibility that rendered them equally insensible to pleasure or to pain, could that alter the law of our nature ? Could that prevent the rest of the world from being wrought to rapture by pleasurable objects, or afflicted with anguish by painful ones ? The *dicta* of philosophy effects no change in the constitution of human affairs.

Away, then, with the Epicurean notion, that the Deity does not trouble himself to attend to the minute concerns of the children of men, and inflict petty scourges upon them. It is very true it is a mark of great condescension, and it struck the inspired writer : "What is man," said he, to God, "that thou shouldst magnify him ? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him ? and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment ?" But once admit that God made the world, and all things in it, and their movements, and you must confess that what it was not beneath him to create, it cannot be beneath him to superintend ; and having created them, he is bound to superintend their movements, that they may answer the end which he designed, and not frustrate his intentions in their existence.

And yet there is a great disposition in every human heart to exclude God out of his own world. There is a marvellous unwillingness to go out of the regions of sense, and to adopt the conclusions of reason, confirmed by revelation. This is especially the case with regard to affliction ; and therefore it is that afflictions

in general are of so little use. Some pay no attention to them; "O, they are mere things of chance, we cannot account for them, and we do not mean to be troubled about them. Bad now, better another time." They "despise the chastenings of the Lord." Others misinterpret afflictions: they lead them to adopt false views and bad thoughts of God: they murmur and complain; they have no recourse to the proper power for succour, and they never apply them to the end designed. But if we look on afflictions in their true light, we should see God coming to us in them, with lessons of reproof, or warning, or caution, or instruction: and we should go to him to decipher them, to be the interpreter of their meaning; and then they would all become a school of instruction to us, a discipline of goodness and mercy, for our improvement and highest welfare.

Let these remarks, then, suffice for the establishment of the first proposition, that God is to be acknowledged as the Author and Dispenser of all afflictions. "*Thou* hast chastised me: not the Assyrian; not my enemies of the neighbouring nations; but by them, and through them, *Thou, O God, thou* hast chastised me."

Secondly, THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN AFFLICTIONS ARE VERY MERCIFUL AND BENEFICENT. That is the next observation that I shall discuss before you; explain, prove, and enforce.

In the afflictions of the human race at large, the design of God in the first instance is always merciful. They are to bring men to become his people. And his afflictions to those who have become his people, have always a benign and gracious end in view. But they must be viewed relatively: they must be always regarded in their reference to certain appointed means of divine instruction and communication. Afflictions are not means of grace: nothing but the truth of God, and the ordinances of religion, of his appointment, strictly speaking, are means of grace. But afflictions are to lead attention to the means—are to recall them to our recollection, and fix their impression. Afflictions never sow the seed of religion in the soul; they cannot do this: but they may soften the soil to receive it, and subserve the growth and the expansion of the seed when sown. They are lessons of instruction to the mind through the senses; corroborating those lessons of truth from Revelation to the mind alone; and which are responded to by the conscience. They are Providence co-operating with truth and with grace for our welfare and improvement.

I say, in the first instance, then, *afflictions are to bring men to become the people of God.* (I am making use of some rather nice distinctions, but I am quite assured, from your attention to-night, that they are understood by you.) In the first instance, they bring men to become the people of God, and that by enforcing and putting in operation those truths and means which have been appointed for that purpose. That this is their design will appear from their nature, and from the result of them in many cases.

*From their nature.* For what, I pray you, is the obvious drift of that disappointment through the whole course of life, in finding happiness from the world—what is the drift of it but to cure us of that mistake, to direct our attention from that object, and to lead us to Him in whose favour is life? What is it, but to corroborate that Scripture which says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you?" What is



the apparent design of certain miserable effects to certain sins, but to breed in us remorse for those sins, to wean us from them, and to corroborate those passages of Scripture which say, "It is an evil and bitter thing to depart from the living God:" "The way of transgressors is hard:" "The wages of sin is death?"

Again, what is the obvious design of those particular evils that belong to our individual condition? What are they, what can they be, but a thorn planted in our earthly nest, to make us arise and go out of it, and seek for happiness in some higher quarter? And as to the frustration of the well-laid schemes of earthly joy by some unexpected occurrence—as to the over-clouding of all our worldly prospects, by some interposition of cloud and calamity—as to the springing up in our lot of some irremediable woe, of some incurable ill—what can be the design of them all, but to make us seek after our happiness from a source which is liable to no such disasters? Affliction tames a man, and brings down the pride and stubbornness of his nature. It demonstrates to him that he cannot be the arbiter of his own destiny, the author of his own happiness. It shews him, that "the way of man is not in himself;" that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;" but that he is encompassed and environed with a power that he cannot control. And though at first he is like one of those wild beasts that are taken in a net, and foams and rages to get loose, yet, finding at length it is all in vain, and his strength is gone, he becomes gentle and tame: and now he is teachable, and prayerful, and an anxious inquirer: now he says, "Who will show me any better good? Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" And there is always an interpreter ready. Job makes it a very conditional thing, because he lived in a time when revelation was scarce: he says, "God chasteneth man: then he openeth his ears, and sealeth their instruction. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness"—that is, God's righteous way, and lead him to a knowledge of the truth. But under the Gospel, where the means of instruction abound, there are such interpreters on every hand. Every Christian minister is one; every private Christian is one; every copy of the Scriptures is one; every good book written upon the Scriptures is one: and they come to a man in this state, and they teach him the meritorious cause of afflictions, which is sin. They shew him how to be delivered from the guilt of sin by the mediation of Christ; and how to be freed from the pollution of sin, by the renewing energies of the Holy Spirit; and how to walk in the path of holiness, which leads to happiness and heaven. I do not mean to say that afflictions, of themselves, can do this: they may be prevented from everything of the kind, by the obduracy and obstinacy of the human will: but I mean to say, that such is their design and tendency, from their very nature.

And that such is *their design*, is evident *from the result of them in many cases*. There are thousands of converted persons at this time on the earth, who would acknowledge this beneficial effect to have accrued from their afflictions. If you were to go into the Church, and ask many of its members how they came into the narrow path, they would reply, that the broad way was hedged up with thorns, and they were driven to seek another. If you were to say "How came you into this ark?" they would reply, "It was the only refuge left: and I heard

a voice saying, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' But I never should have gone, unless the waves of the deluge of trouble had left me nowhere else to rest." Yes, brethren, there are many converted persons who would not hesitate to say, "My undoing in the world was the making of me in religion: I was emptied of my perishable cargo, that I might be laden with durable riches and righteousness. I was set out by cross winds from the deceitful port I was approaching, and driven to this island of the blessed." And thus it is that thousands of Christians will have to say to God in heaven,

" Among the choicest of my mercies here,  
Stand this the foremost—that my heart has bled."

"Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock at first unaccustomed to the yoke: but at length, through affliction, I was brought to my God."

But, secondly, *when men become the people of God, afflictions do not cease*; on the contrary, there are new reasons for the continuance of the former ones, and even for the addition of others to them. But these reasons are all wise and good, and the ends they have in view are so benign and gracious, as far more than to reconcile us to them. And I may say, at least, afflictions are dispensed to the people of God in three ways—as preventives, as restoratives, and as preparatives.

First, *as preventives*. They are to prevent them from degenerating, so as to settle in a state of declension and backsliding from God. And this they do by bringing their sins to their remembrance in a timely way, before they can make head against them. O, when things go on smoothly, how negligently do Christians live! How many things do they adopt into their Christian practice, and interweave into their character, of which, perhaps, they are little aware! What pruriency of discourse; what connivance at the frauds of others, employed by them, and in connexion with them; what practised frauds in their own profession, as customary and common; what influence of worldly motive in their secular pursuits, and in the education of their children; what licentiousness of thought and imagination; what omissions of those duties that ought to have been attended to—what heartless performances of those that are attended to! And yet they are well aware of these things: they content themselves with a general penitence, and general purposes of amendment. But now comes affliction: *that* dissipates the illusions of life that enchant their attention, and disposes their hearts to those full hopes and expectations which crowded them and kept them from seeking after any other good. And now they begin to seek after the causes of these afflictions, and how they stand prepared for worse, that may menace them. All their imperfections come to light, and they wonder at their folly, and at the careless and reckless way in which they have been living. Now come penitential acknowledgments and confessions, bewailings of their iniquity even to the fountain-head of original corruption breaking out in their early days. And this was precisely Ephraim's case: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord, my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

Thus humiliation for sin leads to circumspection and caution, and reformation, and so stops the retrograding progress towards backsliding.

It acts also by quickening devotion when it grows dull. We are very apt to become dead in prayer. It is astonishing what a little thing will spoil devotion and prayer. But that is the most fatal means of leading to a state of declension and backsliding. Whatever may commence declensions, it never can produce sin but through the medium of deadness in devotion. The backslider can always trace his backsliding state up to deadness in devotion. To prevent that comes affliction: this quickens man to devotion, stirs up the filial principle within him, rouses it into operation, and makes him realize his connexion with God. Now, observe a little child amused with a collection of flowers, surrounded by a number of persons, as well as by its parents, you shall see nothing in his conduct that would lead you to suppose that he had any connexion with one of these more than another: but a serpent appears, begins to coil around him, and threatens to infix his sting: and now to whom does he look and turn for relief among them all, but to his parents? You see, by the danger, the connexion between them; the filial principle is roused to action. So it is with the Christian in affliction, when it comes on him. Others might be casting about for relief: but what does he? He opens the closet door, and falls down, and says, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." Affliction renews the zest of religious exercise. It makes prayer sweet, for the relief it gives; and the Bible sweet, for the adaptation of its promises; and the sanctuary of God an asylum in the storms and tossings of the world. And it endears the people of God to us for their companionship and sympathy, their kind attention, and their help: and so it renews those attractions of religion within us, that hold and keep us from degenerating, and settling into a state of backsliding.

Afflictions in this life may be compared to medicines, that repair the decayed appetite for the common supports of the body, and by producing a new relish for them, prevent the body from degenerating into a state of unhealthiness, and confirmed disease. Thus, you see, afflictions are employed as preventives, to stop the people of God, in a retrograde course, from ever going to a settled declension in backsliding. There is no manner of doubt that many of you owe your preservation from that state to the interposition of affliction.

Secondly, *as restoratives*. For they are employed to recover man from a state of backsliding. It is possible for a man to backslide so far, to degenerate little by little, so far from a state of religious steadfastness and vigour, as at length to renounce all its duties: and he shall blot out the distinction of the Sabbath as a sacred day, and use it as one of the days of the week, if he do not abuse it to greater profaneness and folly: and he shall break down the family altar, and close up the lips of family instruction: and he shall put a lock on the closet door, and seem to have done with religion. So far he will go as a backslider. If he be an apostate, who never had any sound or genuine conversion, he may go much further; there is no telling to what lengths he may go. He may become an oppugner of the truth, a species of infidel, an atheist—I know not what. It would be impossible to renew him again to repentance. But if he be only a backslider, he cannot go that length: he never can get rid of the convictions of his judgment in the affairs of religion: he never can join others in denying it, or in ridiculing its advocates, for he inwardly respects them, though he no longer

follows with them ; and he has a respect for religion itself, though he is the disgrace of it : and there is a secret conviction in his breast all the while that he is going wrong, and there is a secret sigh ready every now and then to escape him—"O that it were with me as in months that are past !" Now I take that to be the genuine distinction between a backslider and an apostate ; and that man is capable of recovery : but how ? Here comes in the office of affliction. Absalom sent several messengers to Joab, but he did not come. Said he to his servants, "Go and fire his fields," and immediately Joab came to ask what he wanted. So God fires the fields of the backslider by affliction, and brings him to his footstool.

You observe the cur of the shepherd trained for his particular employment. The shepherd sees a sheep at a distance from his flock—not a strange sheep, but one of his own fold : and he sends the cur after it to frighten it by barking ; and if that will not do, he takes it by his teeth ; and the little animal fears that he is going to be destroyed : but the cur is in better training ; he injures it not at all, nor leaves it till he places it in the fold. So affliction drives the backslider to his God ; or else it lays hold of him, and will not let him go, and brings him back. And then he finds God ready indeed to receive him ; he is received indeed with rejoicing and great comfort. There is joy in heaven, not only over the conversion of the sinner, but over the returning of the poor backslider. Our Saviour shews you this : the good shepherd, he tells us, leaves the ninety and nine in the fold, and goeth after the one that has wandered : and when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulder (the emblem of strength) and brings it into the fold rejoicing. And you see that intimated in the parable of the Prodigal Son : for was there not greater rejoicing over the return of the Prodigal into his father's house, than over the eldest son who had not wandered at all ? You see this intimated in the fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah ; where God, speaking to the Jews, by his prophet Isaiah, says, "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him." But what does he add ? "I have seen his ways, and will heal him : I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips ; Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near : peace to the backslider on his return, as also to the Christian that is in the fold. Is it not so in the text ? "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus : Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke : turn thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh : I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." And what follows ? "Ephraim, my dear son ! Ephraim, my pleasant child ! for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

I cannot help thinking, that these representations of the great comforts attending the backslider's return to God, to which he has been brought by affliction, are designed to meet and to relieve the despair of the poor backslider when he comes to himself. "What," says he, "can I be forgiven my sins ? How great they have been ! Mine has been the rebellion of the subject, the disobedience of the child ; I quenched the divine light ; I have refused to



hearken to the divine voice as a Father: and can I be restored?" What is the answer of God? "Return unto me, O backsliding people, and I will return unto you; and I will love you freely: so shall you render to me the calves of your lips." The returning backslider knows it: and if you ask him for the reason of his comforts, he can give it:—

" Whence to me this truth and love ?  
Ask my Advocate above :  
See the cause in Jesus' face,  
Now before the throne of grace.

Jesus speaks, and pleads his blood :  
He disarms the wrath of God :  
Now my Father's bowels move,  
Justice kindles into love."

I am very sorry I cannot conclude the subject, and represent afflictions as *preventives*. I have thought it right to devote a discourse to the subject, because it has to do with the whole economy of life, and it is of the utmost importance to have clear and just views on the universally interesting subject of affliction.

Let me say, therefore, in conclusion, what a cure there is here for murmuring. You repine at your afflictions, and you might do so if they were a thing of chance; if they were only to trouble you, and vex you, and prevent you from being happy, and nothing more. But they have a design, and a tendency, and a use about them—to bring you to a greater happiness than you ever could have in their absence.

" All nature is but art unknown to thee ;  
All chance direction which thou canst not see ;  
All discord harmony not understood ;  
All partial evil universal good."

Afflictions are designed to bring you to the means that are necessary for your safety, your improvement, and your future bliss. They break your cisterns of earthly happiness, but it is only to lead you to the fountain. They hedge up your way with thorns; but it is only to keep you from the paths of the destroyer, and to bring you into the heavenly way, that leads to happiness and life. They tear that silken net that wealth and ease were weaving over thee, but only to entangle thy soul, and to prevent its escape to higher and to better regions.

Therefore ye unconverted persons who are not at present the subjects of affliction, have no cause to boast of your freedom; for in reality it is a freedom from a salutary discipline, which an unconverted state renders necessary, to prevent it from being their ruin. And those unconverted persons, who have been under affliction should ask whether their afflictions have answered their intended end. Have they brought you to God? Have they, by the co-operation of the Spirit of Truth, brought you to Jesus Christ for recovery from guilt, and to the blessed Spirit for recovery from pollution, and into the way of righteousness as a way of peace: have they had this effect? I am speaking to persons to-night in an unconverted state, who have been thus dealt with for many years; and I ask you seriously, What is the result? Have all these afflictions, disappointments, and vicissitudes of life had their end? Have you become the people of God? O, it is very necessary that you should answer that

question, because if that be the case, they will in time lose their merciful design, and alter their character. Instead of correctives they will become avengers; the rod will be turned into the sword: and if they have failed to soften, they will be sent in future to harden you the more. Was not that the case with the plagues in Egypt? The first was sent to see whether Pharaoh would reform; but he hardened his heart under the first, and God sent the rest to harden him still more. And if your afflictions are in vain for a long course of time to bring you to God, then one of two things is very likely to follow—(and I know not which is the worst)—either the total withdrawalment of affliction to let you go on in ease, and to lull you into a fatal lethargy; or else to drive affliction upon you, to exasperate you, and to goad you to destruction. I wish you might think of this; and more especially as the year is drawing to an end, and as your days are drawing to an end. It is only this evening that I have heard of a very affecting event: a young man, in the prime of life, the brother of an individual present, thirty-four years of age, and in perfect health yesterday week, was taken suddenly with a fit, and never had a moment's sanity, till on Tuesday morning he died: and over that death we must drop a veil.

I hold a book in my hand which contains an affecting incident in reference to the invalidity of death-bed repentances; and I will read it for the purpose of guarding you once more against that deceitful hope. This very book is a striking proof and illustration of what I had meant to insist on—the beneficent effects that may come out of an affliction that was sent for wise purposes. It is the production of a respected minister among the Congregational denomination in this country. An individual, intrusted with a legacy, which afforded this minister, by the interest of it, fifty pounds per annum, in addition to a small salary among a poor congregation—that individual turned out a hypocrite; he became a bankrupt, and it was found he had never invested the property, and the few debts that the minister had contracted, in prospect of receiving the payment of the interest, he was obliged afterwards to pay: and the contention of the matter involved him in a sum of much more than one hundred pounds. His church took a deep interest in the cause, but he was obliged to borrow the sum, and he knew not how to obtain it in an honourable way. His family required support. God put it in his heart to write this book—"The Sick Visitor's Assistant;" and he has submitted to the rather degrading, though honest, employment of selling them himself, by which he has almost realized the sum he wanted. In stating the case to me, he said, "Who could have foreseen, that such a disappointment or affliction would have been for good? But it has; it has made me know that I can write so as to interest the public; it has thrown me on my resources; it has raised affection for me in my church; filled my church with individuals from the neighbourhood; and made me a happier minister than ever I was before." This is one of the anecdotes contained in the book: "A pious clergyman, for more than twenty years, kept an account of the sick persons he visited during that period. The parish was thickly peopled, and, of course, many of his parishioners, during his residence, were carried to their graves. A considerable number, however, recovered; and amongst these, two thousand, who, in immediate prospect of death, gave those evidences of a change of heart, which, in the judgment of charity, were connected with everlasting salvation, supposing them to have died under the

circumstances referred to. As, however, the tree is best known by its fruits, the sincerity of their death-bed repentance was yet to be tried, and all the promises and vows thus made, to be fulfilled. Now out of these two thousand persons (who were evidently at the point of death, and had given evidence of a sound repentance)—out of these two thousand persons who recovered, two, only two—allow me to repeat it—two, only two, “by their future lives, proved that their repentance was sincere, their conversion genuine. One thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight returned to their former carelessness, indifference, and sinfulness: and thus shewed how little that repentance is to be depended upon, which is merely extorted by the rack of conscience, and the fear of death.” I have no doubt at all of the correctness of this representation, and that it exists in other cases, to an extent of which, perhaps, scarcely any good man, or any good woman is aware.

I take, therefore, the present opportunity, with all seriousness and solemnity of mind, of warning you once more against this deceitful hope, entreating you to go home, and ask whether God the Holy Spirit, has ever wrought a work of repentance, and a saving change in your heart. And if you should find by examination that nothing of the sort is the case, O do not let the year close, do not let the day close, do not let the night pass over you, without humbly beseeching God to have mercy on your souls; and say, “O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner!”

From the whole here is a *lesson of distinction*. The afflictions of the people of God are of a totally different character from all other afflictions. When you change your character, all afflictions change their character to you. The character of affliction is to be determined by the character of the individual whom they assail. The moment you become a child of God, that moment all afflictions become to you the discipline of a Father, and not the infliction of a Judge. And there are three points of difference between the afflictions of the people of God, and all other afflictions.

In the *first* place, there is never any wrath in them; never any penal anger; never any punishment for sin in them—mere punishment. How should there be, when Christ their Surety stands between them and God, to receive all the punishment for their guilt? And therefore (which is more than we can say of the afflictions of the unconverted), in all the afflictions of the people of God, in all those afflictions, in the first place, there is not one drop of penal wrath.

Then, in the *second* place, they are warranted to expect under them divine supports. An unconverted man is not. He may, for aught he know, have to bear them alone; there is not a promise that tells him of divine support. But there are many which bear this divine cordial and support to the people of God in affliction: “When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee, and through the floods, it shall not overflow thee.” Perhaps you never have so much reason to expect the gracious presence of God to you, as when you are in affliction: just as the three young men never had the visible presence of the Son of God in their midst, until they were in the furnace. “As our afflictions abound without”—what says the Apostle?—“so our consolations abound also within. And what are afflictions, if we have consolations within to sustain them? What are all the waves of the deluge beating on the ark, while God is with Noah in the midst, and indulging him with his gracious visits?”

And, *thirdly*, for all their afflictions, the people of God are warranted to expect a gracious and abundant recompense. "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." How work it out? By working in us a greater capacity for enjoyment; for, surely, heaven will be sweeter to none than to the poor afflicted soul: by working in us a ground of comparison and contrast, to set it off. No man ascends to prosperity with so much pleasure, as the man who ascends to it out of the depths of adversity. So will it be with heaven; by working in us a conformity to Jesus Christ. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." When we are like him in suffering, we shall be like him in glory; and the more we suffer for him, the more will he recompense us in heaven. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; for great is your reward in heaven." Why, really, it is enough almost to make us choose affliction, as Moses did, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," because he had "respect to the recompense of the reward." It is enough to make us try how we may meet with such a cross and try how we can bear it. That was the case with the primitive saints, and with some of the martyrs. A good woman was once seen hurrying along to a certain spot, and the question was asked her where she was hastening to: "O," said she, "there are some Christians to be burnt, and I am afraid I shall be too late to have the honour of martyrdom." And many of the first Christians were grievously disappointed when they missed the honour of martyrdom for the sake of religion.

What a religion is Christianity! How superior does it make a man to all the circumstances of life—how superior to all the attractions of life! Because its comforts and consolations are superior to all its crosses, by its supports and its practice: for what can daunt a man who is to gain by his afflictions—who is ambitious of suffering, and even of dying for the sake of Christ? What can the world do to a man who is ambitious of suffering? And what does the Christian hero say to his fellows in their trials?

"Come on, ye partners in distress,  
My comrades through the wilderness,  
Who still this body fill;  
And still forget your griefs and fears,  
And look beyond this vale of tears,  
To that celestial hill.  
We suffer with our Master here;  
We shall before his face appear,  
And by his side sit down:  
To patient faith the prize is sure,  
And all that to the end endure  
The cross shall wear the crown.  
Tears become bliss. Inspiring hope!  
It lifts the abject sinner up;  
It brings to life the dead.  
Our conflict here shall soon be past,  
And you and I ascend at last,  
Triumphant with our Head."



## THE CONFLICT AND THE CONQUEST OF FAITH

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“Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.”—1 SAMUEL, xvii. 45.

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It is not recorded how long David continued in the court of Saul as the king's visitor; and, though his appointed armour-bearer, it does not appear that he was ever employed in that office. We have, however, circumstantial evidence enough to prove that David returned unto Bethlehem, to his father's house, again to feed his sheep, and that some time—I conceive some considerable time—elapsed between that period and the scene which is opened out in the chapter before us: for, as you may read at the close of the chapter, “And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.” But though he had forgotten David, and was unmindful of his past benefits, yet we find that the Lord thought upon him, and, during this interval, prepared him for the work that was before him. He did not send him into the battle-field before he had matured him for such a conflict; as David himself afterwards testifies: “Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.” Before this he had faced the lion and the bear, and had slaughtered them: and, indeed, as some think, had encountered many a lion and many a bear, in order that thereby he might try how great his strength was when he put his trust in the Lord.

God is not unmindful of any of his anointed ones: he has a work for all his faithful people to do; and, as they go forth with a promise, so do they also carry with them the command, “Occupy till I come.” There are no sinecures in his court; there are no drones in his camp. It was a great work to which David was called; there were before him great conflicts, and great triumphs, and great glory; and though the great God was with him, yet he had to fight his way through great trials, great perils, and great enemies—greater and more powerful than any human skill and strength could meet: and therefore he required great

faith. But God does not send any of his people to a warfare at their own charges. If they are pitted with great enemies, they shall have great strength: if they are to meet with great dangers, they shall have great courage: if they are to be exercised with great conflicts, they shall have great grace. Let not the saints of God, therefore, be afraid with any amazement, as though some new thing had happened to them; though they are tried by tribulation, by fightings without, and fears within—though they are cast down, and are in heaviness for a season, through manifold temptations: for great faith argues great triumphs; otherwise how should great faith be known? Great trials are sent to faith, that faith may thereby be proved, evince its strength, and so become precious to them that believe; as St. Peter observes: “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Among the various exploits, the trials and the triumphs of faith that are recorded in the Word of God, that is not the least which is exhibited to us in the combat between Goliath of Gath, a giant, and David, a stripling. There are two particulars wherein the analogy may be traced between the experience of David, and the experience of the Church of Christ: they are, the conflict and the conquest of faith in the hour of trial and temptation.

I would call your attention, in the first place, to **THE CONFLICT OF FAITH**. It is stated in the account before us, that Goliath, the Philistine champion, went out and defied the armies of the living God. Israel stood abashed; indeed it appears they were all panic-struck, for they fled every man to his tent. At this time it was David arrived in the camp, and heard the challenge; and then it was he exhibited the ardour and the indignation of his soul, as well as his concern and his jealousy for the honour of God. But before he proceeded to the conquest, he had to encounter many obstacles from without; while, there is not the least doubt, he was exercised by many trials within.

In the first place he was tried *by the gigantic stature and martial appearance of his adversary*, whilst he was a stripling, and a stripling unarmed. It is in vain to suppose that David was divested of human feeling: however strong in faith a man may be, still he is but man, and has about him all the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature. We have an instance of this in our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when his hour was come, could say to his enemies, that he was ready to fulfil the work that was before him; though previously to this he evinced all the infirmities of man; he was sore troubled, even unto the very death that he came to accomplish, and could say, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:” but in the hour when it pleased the Father that he should drink it, he took it: “The cup that my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?” So as regards David: in the hour of conflict, he was strong as a lion; but at times, like other men, he was exercised with as many fears and infirmities as the present danger and apprehension of the case would occasion.

He was exercised, also, *by the rebukes of his brethren*. Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, “Why comest thou hither? and with whom

hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." Whatever might have been the feeling of Eliab's mind—whether it was real apprehension for his brother, or, which is more likely, envy, because David thus stood forward to vindicate the honour of God—still David had in it that which was calculated to damp the ardour which he felt disposed to exhibit.

And after this, he was discouraged *by Saul himself*. "For David said to Saul. Let no man's heart fail because of him: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee." But yet Saul conceived it was right he should be first clad in armour: and so we are told, "Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go." There seems to have been here some misgiving of mind on the part of David; at all events he seems to enter into the views of Saul, and thinks it would be better to be armed to meet an armed champion. But when he assayed to go, he found he was unable; "and he said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them. And David put them off him."

And, in the midst of all this, the devil would be no silent or unconcerned spectator of the transaction: there is not a question but that David would be inwardly exercised, and agitated, and harassed, perhaps by the very same thoughts which he has often put into the hearts of God's people, and had, before this, put into the heart of Saul; and he might have argued, "Is it not presumption in me, a stripling, to meet a giant? Is it not rashness?" And might he not consider the taunt of his brother, and the remonstrance of Saul, to be to him the voice of God? And when he had tried on the armour, having been brought to the conviction that he should appear armed, might he not conceive that this was a voice from God; and that, inasmuch as he could not be fitted with armour, he was not a fit antagonist for the Philistine champion? There is no doubt these thoughts might have arisen in his mind: nevertheless, the name of God was dishonoured; therefore "he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand." Thus went forth David—the object of pity and compassion to some, of envy and contempt to others. but when he returned from the field, he became at once the wonder and the admiration of all.

Which things, Christian brethren, are an allegory ; for herein we see the camp of the living God, the Church of Christ assailed by Apollyon the destroyer, the old serpent, the devil. I am now, then, to call your attention to his mode of attack. You will find it is, in the first place, by open assault, and, secondly, by subtle and hidden device.

It is, in the first place, *by open assault*. It is this method which is adopted by the great deceiver and accuser of the brethren. He tries and harasses the people of God in the early stages of their experience by open assault, by bringing against them open railing accusations, and thereby attacks their faith. "You," says he to one—"You a child of God! It is presumption. You fancy yourself to be in a state of grace; yours is common grace, and not the special grace of God's elect. Your religion is mere profession; it is bare head-knowledge; and it were better had you made no profession at all. Had you not been linked with one that made you feel the power of truth—it may have been your husband, your wife, your father, or your mother: *he* professed, because he felt what he said: he explained to you all the workings of his mind, his feelings, his views, and his experience, and thus it is you made a profession, and thus it is you fancy you are in the faith of Christ. But no; yours is only imagination, for look at him—look at the true children of God; see how they soar; see how much of peace and joy of God they have in their souls; see what progress they make. Then look at yourselves: see how you are grovelling in the dust, how low you are: look at your guilt and your sins, and your spots; these are not the spots of the children of God. Vain are your prayers and your efforts: I defy them all; you are mine: lay down the weapons of your rebellion, and bow before your **rightful sovereign**: come to me, and see whether you can withstand me: come, **and** see whether I have power over thee, whether I cannot bring thee low by **fears**, and doubts, and various exercises." This is the language of him who was a liar from the beginning. Thus it is the devil assails the faith of the children of God; thus he would pull you down, and possess you with the feeling that you do not put your trust in the Lord. And mark, if he finds you but one little moment hiding in any strong-hold but Christ—if he finds you encased in any other armour but Christ, he will at once pull you down from the pinnacle of your greatness, and pull you out of the fold.

But if faith holds out (and here, beloved Christians, your faith shall hold out), then he will raise the siege for a season; he will appear to retire, and he will assail your faith in another direction; and that will be *by subtle, wily, hidden device*. Transforming himself into an angel of light, he will try you as he did David, by your friends—by false friends, and by true friends.

The devil tries the faith of the people of God by *false brethren*; by those who are really nothing but professors; having much knowledge, but no spirit; who are lamps without oil, clouds without water. When a godly man, for instance, either by supineness, or neglect, or some worldly compliance, is uncomfortable in his mind, because he has dishonoured God, and his conscience tells him so; and when, feeling that he has brought darkness upon his mind, and deadness upon his soul, by having thus been living at a distance from God, he feels desirous of returning to God; and when he girds up the loins of his mind with divine truth, and is prepared to go onward, running the race of faith and love,



he must be prepared to contend with the taunt and the jeer which he has either provoked or cherished; and then his professing friends will say, "Wherefore this sudden change? Why this precision? Surely this is being righteous over-much." And they will go on further to say; "I know there is a sort of people who, with demure look and sanctified appearance, though they will not join the festal board, yet they will belie you, they will dispute with you for a mite, over-reach you in a bargain, and cheat you to your face. I like not these high-talking, professing people; I like a consistent man—one that moves consistently with his principles." And he assumes this, you will observe, not as a cloak of dissimulation, but as a cloak of defence, in order that he may thereby justify his worldly spirit, and his want of religion. Yet (he will say) religion is cheerful; it bars not the door to the social happiness of life: it encourages the innocent recreations of the world." And thus would he go on to marry the Church and the world together, and so associate Christ with Belial. And if faith holds out here, then follows the charge of spiritual pride, and affected singularity: "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart: thou art actually nothing; but thou art ambitious to be much."

The people of God are further tried through the instrumentality of those who are *true* brethren. Satan, you will remember, dared to try the great Head of the Church by one of his Apostles. Peter said unto him, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Our Lord saw the spirit of Satan working in the mind of his Apostle, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." When a child of God, in some season of his life—and, blessed be the Most High, there are seasons of revival—becomes more alive, like David, to the honour of his heavenly Father, then he is more jealous over himself, over his heart, and more watchful over others, not willing to allow sin in others. This high tone of spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, my Christian brethren, will not sit easy upon those real children of God who are in a cold, dull, and formal frame. And why? Because it reads sentence and passes judgment upon them because they are exhibiting so little concern for the glory of the Lord who has bought them: and they will say in self-vindication, "This is casting pearls before swine: *you* are not able to convert all these people; it is too much for you." But when we are in a healthy state of soul, how closely does the work of self-discipline go forward! With what keen eye do we search into all the dark corners and hidden chambers of the heart! What a watchfulness is there of the thoughts—yea, the very imaginations of the thoughts! And what tenderness of conscience; how are we humbled before God! It is too much for those who are not in a lively state to bear with this close self-examination.

But if faith remains inflexibly firm against this attack, then the devil tries the children of God *by ungodly people*. It may be by those of their own household—by father, or mother, or those who are in power and authority. Making use of them as the organ and the engine of his mischief and his foul machinations, Satan says to them, "Drop your colours; lay aside these foolish notions about religion, this superstition, this enthusiasm" (perhaps it is the language of a father, or a mother, or a brother, or a sister); "lay them aside, or renounce me: you shall receive no more tokens of my love and my regard for you, if you do not. How many instances can you call to mind, wherein I have dealt very

tenderly with thee, imparting to thee all thy heart's desire as far as I could. And will you not oblige me in this? Will you, for the sake of these strange notions, refuse to obey your best friend? And can you thus prove you have any affection or regard for me? Is this your religion that teaches you to dishonour your father and your mother?" O, sirs, here is the conflict of faith in them that are exercised thereby—the struggle between conscience and feeling, between our duty to man and our duty to God.

Or if it should happen that Satan is attacking persons in the subordinate ranks of life, he will say to a servant, "Give up, or you shall lose my service;" or to a mechanic, "Lay aside these religious notions, or you shall lose my custom;" or to those who are depending on their talents, to their profession, to their trades, for the sustenance of themselves and their children, "Put off these strange ideas about religion, or you shall lose my countenance, and you shall lose my practice." And then, pouring in fears, apprehensions, and distress of soul, the devil parleys, yea, brethren, and brings them to parley with him: "Dare you brave this hazard, and thus sacrifice the bright hopes, the clear prospects and expectations which a good Providence has set before you? You are not able to go out and fight this Philistine; you are but a youth. Lay aside, then, these opinions which so grossly deceive you; and then you may be both rich and happy." O, sirs, thus it is that the serpent winds his wily folds round the heart of the people of God, even unto hesitation. Here is the struggle, here is the tug of inward warfare. They say, "May I not make this little surrender? May I not give up this little thing but for once? Will not the peculiar delicacy, or the peculiar difficulty, of my case extenuate this concession? Then put on the armour and go forth." Yes, Satan sometimes brings the people of God to this pass; and they have put the armour on, and they have gone forth in it. But it would not fit the gracious soul; he cannot fight in this armour, he has never been accustomed to such weapons as these. And then faith revives; faith comes in to his aid: he is on the alert; and he says, "What! shall I fear man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and not fear God? What! shall I lend myself to compliances, and compromises, and sacrifice of principle, and dishonour God? What! shall I give up my leaning on the everlasting arm of the Most High, to lean on an arm of flesh? What! shall I lose all my peace, and my comfort, and the happiness of my soul in God, for the smiles of men and the favour of the world? Get thee behind me, Satan." And then, with one mighty effort, the man of God flings away the sword and shield of expediency, he throws off the armour of human contrivance; he whirls the empty casque in the air, and says, "I cannot go forth with these." But he marches forth undauntedly to the combat in naked integrity alone; and yet not alone, because God is with him, and will make him more than conqueror, to the praise of his name, and the glory of his grace.

We pass on to make some few remarks ON THE CONQUEST OF FAITH IN THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION.

There are two things that are notable in the exploits of David: the one was, the strength of his confidence—the other, the weapons of his warfare. The one you know, was God: "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the

God of Israel, whom thou hast defied:" his weapons were the sling and the stone. Not that David was without armour; every soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ has armour on: and so had David; but it was not Saul's armour, not man's armour. God equips all his believing people for their warfare, as soon as he inclines them into his service: he leads them into his armoury, and opens all the stores he has provided for them, where they see what is fitted for them, and that which is commanded of God. He makes them acquainted with this, and lays the foundation of their faith, because they see in whom they have believed, and on whom they have to depend.

Similar to this, was the conduct of Hezekiah, which seems beautifully to convey the idea of God's gracious conduct to the believing soul. "Hezekiah was glad of them"—that is, the ambassadors of the king of Babylon—"and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not." This conveys to our mind a sweet idea of the gracious dealings of God with his people. He leads us into his treasury, shows us the unsearchable riches of his grace, and what he has provided to enable us to fight the good fight of faith: he shows us the weapons of our divine warfare, the strength of them, and that they are of divine manufacture: there is nothing in all his dominions that he does not open out, in order that we might put our trust in him, and go out in his strength to battle. This is the armour that Paul exhorts us to put on, when he says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Thus harnessed, my brethren, David went forth to meet the uncircumcised Philistine; and in this confidence he said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come unto thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." O sirs, what a standard is here! David puts his life into his right hand because the name of his God is assailed. My brethren, where is the standard of your faith? Does not this plant a stab in the temporizing spirit of modern Christians? Where is the man now to be found who will put his life into his right hand for the sake of any indignity which may have been offered up to the name of his God? His life! Alas, for the apathy of the day in which we live! Where is the man that will even dare to risk his name, or his reputation, or his interest? Scarcely one will be found willing to hazard his ease or his credit to vindicate

the honour of the God who has bought him with his blood. Not so David. he, full of faith, went out, because he heard the name of his God dishonoured, and his Israel reproached. "What : against a giant, and a champion, in arms !" "No matter ; he has blasphemed the name of my God, and in the strength of that God will I go out and meet him, yea, unarmed as I am." Thus went David forth, though only a ruddy youth, with a sling and a stone, and levelled in a moment the haughty Philistine with the dust.

"The weapons of our warfare," beloved Christians, "are not carnal, but mighty through God." And whenever a saint of God may go forth to battle, under any extreme peril, or any peculiar temptation—if he go out in the name of God, and act out faith in the God in whom he trusts, such is the exemplar of the conquests which he shall gain. Never was any yet brought to confusion who put his trust in the Lord. But what is the weapon by which he quells his foes, by which he quiets his inward fear, by which out of weakness he is made strong, waxeth valiant in fight, and putteth to flight the armies of the aliens ? Not the word which man's wisdom teacheth : no ; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth—the word of God. "Thus it is written"—that is the weapon with which Christ repelled and subdued the devil. "Thus it is written"—this is the weapon with which also his people all prevail. What is it, my brethren, that has at times delivered you out of your fears, and supported you under trial, and brought light in the midst of darkness ? The word of God—some truth, some promise written in your heart by the Holy Spirit ; and you have been delivered, and your enemy has been driven before your face. So it is when the Christian champion, the soldier of Jesus Christ is tried, and he goes forth to fight ; he takes up his sling. There is as well a similitude in the spirit as in the weapon, between David and the Church. He goes forth with a sling—"Thus it is written : " and in that sling he puts the Word of God ; some truth or some promise ; the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which breaketh in pieces the iron and the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold. By faith he takes a well-directed aim, and by prayer and supplication he slings the fatal bolt, and wounds his enemy in the head. And so it is written, "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head ;" and, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken into pieces ; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind them to powder."

O may we not, on review of our experience, beloved, say—not "Blessed is the people who are rich," but—"Blessed is the people who have the Lord for their God." Are you tried by sorrow, by affliction, by temptation in your career ? Marvel not ; but remember this—it is a mark of sonship, it is the evidence that you are in the faith of Christ, that you are thus exercised by him. O then remember to fulfil the duties here described : trust in the Lord ; put not your trust in the arm of flesh, but look to him ; and he will keep and preserve you safe, for "He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed in him."

But I may be addressing those who know little of the peace and comfort, and the strength of faith in Christ. Now unto you I would say, brethren, Seek it : the way before you is plain. If you are still in your sins, do not take up the profession of Christ unadvisedly. Follow not the example of some, who take it



merely as a creed, and learn it in the theory, while they act it not. There is something that prevents your entering into the kingdom of heaven ; and what is that ? The sins you have committed ; the guilt you have contracted, and brought upon your poor soul. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God ; confess and acknowledge your sins, if you feel them ; and if you have not a penitential heart pray that you may have that broken heart, and contrite spirit that he will not despise : and then believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall find peace to your souls.

## THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED.

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“ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.”—LUKE, vii. 11—15.

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THE former act of healing the centurion's servant was done to a man full of faith and of the fruits of faith; and is therefore an encouragement to all the faithful to look unto Him in whom they have believed, that they may be healed from all their diseases, and delivered from all their infirmities. But this more wonderful demonstration of divine power was done unto a sorrowful mother, concerning whose faith or character our Lord seems neither to have been informed, nor to have sought information: and therefore it is a lesson to all the sons and daughters of affliction, without any exception, to flee for consolation and to seek their help in Him who was anointed “ to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

Now may the Spirit of God fill our hearts with a divine tenderness and sympathy, such as moved the divine Saviour when he beheld this desolate mother, that we may speak comfortably to every afflicted soul; and leave upon all the solemn conviction, that a great Prophet hath arisen up among us, and that God hath visited his people.

The event was on this wise. The Lord having fulfilled his commission to the town and neighbourhood of Capernaum, where he had done many mighty works, and held many edifying discourses both in the synagogues and in the open places; passed on from Capernaum to another corner of the great harvest field—which is the world—there also to scatter the seed of life eternal. And most like unto a traveller bound on a celestial message to the souls of men, he hastened to another town where he might have numerous audiences of people, and larger scope for his ministry of health to the body, and his ministry of salvation to the souls of men. In which, as in every thing else, the Lord should be the example of his ministering servants, to whom the scenes of silent and inanimate nature, with all their picturesque beauty, and sublime grandeur, should be as nothing, and all the sentimental musings which are sung and said

over them should be as the voice of the winds which sigh among the uninhabited solitudes, while he, the messenger of immortality hastens on from one dwelling-place of immortal souls to another; to populous villages and sick alleys of crowded towns, in order to impart to the perishing people the Word of life with which he is commissioned from the Prince of Life.

The countenance of a man, though it be fierce and savage as the rough wilderness, and hard as the flinty rock, the countenance of an immortal man is the true scene to awaken the lively emotions of the minister of Christ: to it let him address his weightiest discourse; over that image of God in ruins—not over the ruins of an uninhabited town, but over that image of God in ruins—let his melancholy musings wander; and to repair that wreck, let him bring his heavenly means; and to quicken it with divine light, let him prophesy from morning till evening. For in one day the Lord went from Capernaum to Nain—a distance I should judge of not less than twenty or thirty miles—attended by many disciples and much people: for we know that as he went along his custom was, to drop ever and anon words of wisdom and memorable parables, containing the mysteries of his kingdom. So that the multitude followed to hear and learn more of his doctrine, and to witness larger demonstrations of his power. For he had not yet ventured to expound the mystery of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, which scattered them all abroad. Their first feelings of Christ still lay fresh in their minds; their hope that he would fulfil their idea of Messiah, kindled in their hearts. They had not discovered the unworldliness and the spirituality of his kingdom, though they hung on his lips with earnestness. Ah! and if they had been faithful and would have been convinced! Never, never, until he come again shall men have such an evidence of the divinity of their Teacher as was prepared for this company which attended his steps from Capernaum to Nain. For the Father, in consideration of the weakness of their faith, had prepared for them a scene and an act whereby to glorify God in their sight, and in the sight of the people of that town to which he came. And that the Saviour of men might be received with due honour into the town, the great and mighty act was done without the gate, in the presence of a mighty concourse of the townsmen.

Now you must observe, for the understanding of this act, the manner of the Jews in those times, as it is with eastern nations still. The cemeteries for the dead were generally without the walls of the town: because of the great respect they paid to the graves of the dead, and because of certain superstitious notions concerning the resurrection, they were careful not to molest the graves for a long time: so that their burying-grounds were of larger extent than ours, and not to be contained within the walls of towns.

Another thing is necessary to be known concerning the bier. It was borne on the shoulders of men—if the dead person were of any age—and on it lay the corpse of the deceased, with the face frequently exposed, till it came to the place of burial, which by the Jews is called, “the House of the Living.” There the lid of the coffin was nailed, and the body consigned to the earth, with many words and acts, all significant of the resurrection.

As the Lord approached the gate of the city, with a multitude of disciples, who had borne him company from Capernaum, or joined him by the way; they were carrying forth to the common burying-ground the body of a young man,

the only son of his mother, who was a widow. The severest blow which death can bring is the death of an only son; to a mother who is a widow it is doubly severe; and to a mother in Israel the stroke was embittered manifold. For an Israelite to have a son was to have a personal interest in the promised seed; and to be without a son was to be without that sweetest, noblest expectation.

Upon this son all the affections of a mother's heart had centered, and in him all the widowed affections of a wife had sought refuge, with which the religious feelings of a Jewish mother had entwined themselves. And he had grown up to manhood—for the Lord said, "Young man"—under an anxious, careful eye; and from the attendance of his townsmen, we may judge he was honoured and beloved among men; and haply the mother was entering into the honourable occupation of her son, forecasting many a scheme of maternal fondness, loving all in him, and loving all for him, and in him renewing the hopes of her youth; when at once the staff and prop of her age is taken away, the consolation of her widowhood is cut off, and her memorial is perished from the earth, and the glorious hope of a mother in Israel is gone from her for ever, and she is left forsaken and forlorn.

The Lord saw her as she went her heavy way, weeping by the bier of her departed son. The Lord needed no interpretation of her sad calamity; and her sad calamity needed no advocate in his breast. When he saw her he had compassion on her. This was a moment of great wonder and of awful suspense to the mother, to the mourners, and to the multitude. They are stopped in their short and solemn journey by a stranger, who forbids the vexed and troubled mother to weep, and lays his hand with majesty on the bier whereon the deceased reposed. Fit prelude of tenderness and dignity to the mighty act which follows.

He read his summons for the attention of the multitude; which being held in mute amazement, and rivetted in deep expectation of what was to follow, the Creator and Lord of life, and the Redeemer from death, gave forth his solemn word into the ear which had been for days stopped in death—"Young man, I say unto thee, arise." And the lifeless clay heard the voice of the Word of God, and arose; that which was numbered with the clods of the valley is again numbered with the sons of living men; the ear stopped by death awakens to the voice of men; the eye sealed by death opens to the light of heaven; the stiff joints resume their living virtue; the bloom of health re-animates the pale clay; and the soul from its unknown sojourn comes to its deserted habitation, to possess it once more with quickening light—all at the bidding of a man, of one of the sons of men. Nay, but he cannot be of the sons of men, whose voice can speak to things that are not as though they were. It was not the voice of man which the disinherited clay and disembodied soul obeyed at once; but it was the voice that said, "Let there be light," and there was light; the power by which all things were created out of nothing; in whom is life; who came to destroy death, and him that had the power of death; and who said concerning himself, "The hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall awake."

There are two such mighty acts recorded in the Old Testament; and it is remarkable, both done for the sake of widows. One done by the hand of Elijah on the widow of Sarepta's only son, who gave him harbour when all Israel afforded none to the persecuted prophet. She was worthy of the act. The



other done by the hand of Elisha, unto the only son of the Shunamite woman, who made for the prophet a chamber in the wall, and entertained him with bread so oft as he passed on his way.

But these two acts of raising the dead were done, observe you, by prayer to God, and in dependance on his divine power: and they are to be regarded, therefore, as single dispensations of his grace, whereby he rewarded the singular kindness of these two matrons unto his servants, and magnified the prophets in their sight, and in the sight of all the people. There is also another instance mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, wherein Peter, but not till after he had prayed to God, raised Tabitha.

In all which cases, observe you, the servants of God sought and found help from him, taking no strength nor glory to themselves. But in this case of the widow of Nain, and in that of the daughter of Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, our Lord proceeded without any confession of inability, without any request for help, to do that which belonged to him, and was proper to him in his own right, and was always present to him and in his own power. And he now—and in his power he said it—said to them both, “I say to thee, arise.” But his Apostles always said, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth I say unto thee, arise:” and when the people were wont to wonder at the power of the Apostles, they said, “Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, as though by our own power we did this thing?”

Not only did Christ in his own name work the works which he wrought, but the Apostles wrought others in his name also: by which we are to understand that he is “the resurrection and the life,” as he declared to the sisters of Lazarus before he raised him; on which occasion it is to be remarked that he addressed these words to the Father: “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me:” but he immediately added; “And I knew that thou hearest me always.” That is, he referred this of Lazarus, as he did all his other acts, to the Father, that the people might believe that he came from the Father. Now, in doing so, he declared his continual and immutable union with the Father; the Father had him, and he had the Father. “I am in the Father, and the Father in me: the words that I speak I speak not of myself, but of him that sent me.” The Apostles derived their power from Christ; Christ identified his with the Father. He did the works in his own name, and desired the people to regard them as demonstrations that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily.

In the same manner he says, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.” But the Apostle says, that he was quickened by the mighty working of the Spirit. To explain which you will remember what was said in the former part of the day, and which I now crave to repeat.

In Christ there was a manifestation of all the persons in the Godhead: he was the Word, but besides being the Word, he manifested the Father and the Spirit. So that the Father declared himself by him; and the Spirit showed himself in him: and while he asserted his own divinity, he taught and manifested the divinity of the Father and the divinity of the Spirit. And he is our way to him, and their way to us; in all respects, the Mediator between us and God. Such is the doctrine of his divinity which groweth out of this speech to the dead and inanimate clay, “Young man, I say to thee, arise.”

He raised himself on the couch on which he was stretched, and began to

speaking; thereby giving immediate testimony to both the eyes and ears of the people, that he was as truly living, as truly in the possession of all his faculties, as the foregoing instant they had known him to be dead, and were proceeding with him to the chambers of the dead. "He delivered him to his mother." And there the act solemnly concludes; sweetly and tenderly concludes; "He delivered him to his mother."

This union of power and tenderness is very sweet to the afflicted soul in all the actions of our blessed Lord; and that is another testimony to me of the divinity of his being. So that I know not which of the three things to admire the most—the Almighty power, the sublime majesty, or the tender feeling of the act. He laid his hand majestically on the bier, and said, "Young man, arise." This is the Almighty power and sublime majesty of the act; but the almighty power and sublime majesty were only the means by which the divine compassion testified itself. For the beginning of the act was, "He had compassion upon her, and said to her, Weep not;" and the end of the act was, "He delivered him to his mother." The impulse, the movements which called forth the divine action in the bosom of the Son of man, was compassion to a sorrowful woman, of whom he knew nothing but her sorrow: and the divine action accomplished not its end, until the tears of the mother were dried up, and her lost son restored to her arms. Therefore, the thing to be most admired is, the compassionate feeling of the Lord for one of the daughters of Adam, distinguished from all the other daughters of Adam by nothing, save the greatness of her sorrow.

Now, what was there in this woman that there is not in any of you, ye daughters of the people of this land? Or what was there in her sorrow that is not in the sorrow of every afflicted mother? And what was there in the sorrow of Jairus for his daughter that is not in the sorrow of any of you the fathers of the people of this land? Let every afflicted father and every afflicted mother, and all the sons and daughters of affliction, know then of a surety, that the same Saviour who had pity on this desolate widow, will have pity on them, to bind up their broken hearts, and to comfort the days of their mourning. And in the day of your trouble make known your sorrow to him, who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and was in all points tempted as you are. He who, unsought, had compassion on this widow, hath already compassion on every son and daughter of affliction; he who wept over the tomb of Lazarus his friend, weepeth with all his friends in the hour of their distress, and will bring them consolation. Nay, more; he who wept over the stony-hearted and bloody-handed Jerusalem, still weepeth over his enemies and over his persecutors, praying to his Father, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

What less, therefore, shall I say to all who hear me more than this, that He who raised the son of this stranger woman, and stopped the issue of her sorrow by his Almighty power, hath for you all, yea, for the most prodigal and wicked of his enemies who now hear me, that most tender compassion which moved him, not to one act of power, but to empty himself of power, to empty himself of honour and of glory, yea, and of life itself, and to humble himself in the dust of death. "While we were yet sinners in due time Christ died for the ungodly." That death was to accomplish, for as many as believe, that which this act of

power and mercy did accomplish for the widow of Nair—to restore to you, not a son, but that which is dearer than an only begotten son, to restore to yourselves your own glory, your own life that hath been lost; and to quench and to stop, not one issue of sorrow, but every sorrow of your hearts; and to bring in an everlasting peace and joy to you all, which the world cannot give, and which the prince of this world cannot take away.

O, these acts of mercy falling from our Lord's hand, as words fell from his mouth, what were they but the few and unfrequent drops before the plentiful shower for which the earth languisheth: they were as the few straggling ripe ears of corn before the plentiful harvest, for which all men hungered: they were but as the early cluster of ripe grapes before the vintage, for the joy of which all men long. The harvest which was to feed the famished soul, the vintage which was to replenish the world's downcast soul with fulness of joy—that was accomplished in the death of Christ. It was the harvest of which these few acts were but as the straggling ears of corn—it was the harvest wherein the Prince of Life emptied himself, and exhibited his powers in the sight of the world, that the earth might be filled with life again. And having passed into the realms of death, where sin and Satan reign absolute; he stripped them of their strength, spoiling the spoiler, and leading captive the captor. So that, if the heavenly host which sung the overture of our redemption at the birth of our glorious Lord, sung it in these words, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”—that same chorus might have sung the *finale* of our redemption in these words—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

Therefore, you who believe in his name have a constant fountain of consolation opened, to which, in all your distresses, you have a free access, and to which let your souls hasten, that they may be filled with joy and gladness. And especially in your trials and afflictions, be assured of the consolations of your Lord, for he is then very near to you, and desireth that you should take everlasting consolation to yourselves. If to this woman—whom there is no reason to believe that he had ever before seen, or knew anything of her worth—he should have out of mere feeling for her lamentation, extended this grace; then why should any one doubt to intreat him with the voice of their weeping, and to speak of their calamities, that he may dispense to them the consolations whereof they stand in need? But how much more his people who have entered into covenant with him, whom he hath justified while yet sinners, to whom all trials are sent that they may profit by them, all afflictions that they may be chased out of sin, and promoted to greater holiness.

I do pray the Lord to bless this instance of his tenderness, that it may prove life to the dead, spiritually dead, in trespasses and in sins. And as the uncalled and unsanctified among us are represented by the young man who lay stretched on the bier; so, I judge, the living and sorrowful mother may be represented among us by those whom God hath quickened with the principles of everlasting life.

For it is not less fitting that we, whom God hath redeemed, should cry with heavy lamentation over our spiritually lifeless brethren, or sisters, or parents, or friends, than she did over her lifeless son. And surely the Lord will more tenderly regard the spiritual weeping and spiritual lamentations of his spiritual

people for their brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers, who are spiritually dead, than he regarded the natural lamentations of those whom we have no reason to believe to have been of his people.

Therefore, brethren, beloved of Christ, as many as the Lord our God hath called, I entreat you, by the love which Christ bore to the ungodly, for whom in due time he died, that you have a sorrow over your unquickened brethren or children, and entreat the Lord, for their sakes, that the Lord of life may say to them, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life:" and at his command they shall arise, and speak among us the words of living men, to the salvation of their own souls, to the edification of our faith, and to the glory of God: which may the Lord grant, and to his name shall be the praise.



## THE MORAL INFLUENCE WE EXERT AFTER DEATH.

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REV. J. CUMMING, A.M.\*

SCOTCH CHURCH, CROWN COURT, COVENT GARDEN, DECEMBER 14, 1834.

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“He being dead yet speaketh.”—HEB. xi. 4.

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THERE can be no question that the text, in its primary import, refers to the faith and accepted sacrifice of Abel; and that the Holy Spirit conveys the important truth, that the departed son of Eve proclaims a useful and healthful lesson, even from the chambers of the tomb—namely, that the blood of Jesus our sacrifice is the ground of all our hopes and acceptance, and that by Him alone, as the living way, is there access to the Father. But we may fairly depart from the personal and specific idea involved in the text, and present it as one of those general and great principles which have a bearing on all—a lesson to the living, and a truth concerning the dead. Every son of man, as well as Abel, “being dead yet speaketh.” Every man that plays a part in the great drama of human life, leaves, at his departure, an impress and an influence, more or less extensive and lasting. The grave of the peasant and the mausoleum of the prince, are alike vocal. The sepulchral vault in which the scion of royalty was laid the other day, as well as the cold, wet, opening of the earth in which the way-side beggar was buried, utters audible and actuating oratory. From every one of the dead a voice is heard, in some circle of the world’s inhabitants, which the knell of their departure does not drown—which the earth and the green sod do not muffle—which neither deafness, nor distance, nor anything that man may devise, can possibly extinguish. Every churchyard speaks often far more thrilling accents than the senate house or the congregations of the living.

No fact is more self-evident, or more universally admitted, than the text; and no fact withal is more generally disregarded by the living. Do not the sayings and doings of your departed relatives often arrest you in the busy stir of human life, and, according to their tone and character, supply you with fresh incentives to holiness and religion, or to godlessness and impiety? Do not their words often echo in the cells of memory? Do not their features and their forms start into bright contrast with the darkness of actual absence, and light up the chambers of imagery with early recollections? Do not the sounds of the one, and the sight of the other, reach your hearts, and tell upon your resolutions, your actions, and your hopes? And, just in proportion to the width of the sphere in which the departed moved, and the strength of intellectual and moral character they possessed and developed, will be the duration and the plastic

\* Occasioned by the death of the Rev. EDWARD IRVING, A.M.

power of that influence they have left behind them. A son, for instance, trained to maturity under the affectionate superintendence of a religious mother, breaks loose in the days of his manhood from all the restraints and ties that bound him to the ways of pleasantness and peace, and wounds the heart of his parent, and brings her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. In after years, and in the far-off land of his prodigality and guilt, early impressions look forth from his memory, from beneath the wreck and rubbish by which they are covered, and rivet his thoughts on the past. In this stilly hour the ghosts of departed scenes of innocence and peace flit before him, and the voice of his heart-broken mother rings amid his heart's emptiness, and she "being dead yet speaketh" from her grave, with an emphasis and effect which she could not command while she sat beneath her own roof, and beside her own hearth. A re-action takes place in his conduct, and all by the instrumentality of the holy conversation and unblemished worth of her whose lips are closed in death, and who "being dead nevertheless speaketh" for her God, His truth, and His glory.

Or we may vary the illustration, and adopt that of a departed minister of Jesus. His tongue was ever eloquent in the cause of piety and eternal things, and his life was the exact counterpart of his creed—the echo of his preaching, the legible and the living illustration of all his sermons. Under such a ministry as this, many remained impregnable to the claims of eternity, "dead in trespasses and sins." When he has been gathered to his fathers, and the voice that sounded the trumpet of alarm and of battle has been hushed in the silence of the tomb, and the fingers that were taught by Jehovah to fight, and to wield the sword of the Spirit, are nerveless in death—O! often there comes from the pastor laid in the grave, a more persuasive and melting eloquence, than there came from the pastor standing in the pulpit; and from the herald of Jesus wrapped in his winding-sheet, a more successful sermon, than from the herald of Jesus robed in the emblems of his ministerial character. Deep often is the appeal that comes from his grave, and spirit-stirring and touching the discourse which "he being dead yet speaketh." His example lingers behind him; the *imperishable* of his nature walks among his flock, visiting their homes, comforting the mourner, warning the careless, and teaching the ignorant, and continues to stand in the pulpit which the living man occupied, and "to reason of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment."

This, my Christian brethren, is the fair side of the portrait; and were the influence left behind by the dead universally of this stamp and character, then would men be throughout their biography like visitant angels of mercy passing athwart our miserable world, distilling balm and scattering light among men's sons; or as transient gales from the spicy lands of the East, or glorious meteors arising in rapid succession amidst the moral darkness of the earth, imparting light and fearlessness to its many pilgrims, and this would be bettered by every successive generation, till it arose and expanded to its millennial blessedness and peace. But alas! if many of the dead yet speak for God, and for the eternal welfare of humanity, many, many also speak for Satan, and ply after, as before their death, the awful work of sealing souls in their slumber, and smoothing and adorning the paths that lead to eternal death. Just reverse the portraits we have drawn. Suppose that the mother we have alluded to was one that forgot, alike and altogether, the claims of her God, her soul, and her family; and, both by her

example and her tuition, fostered the evil passions which are indigenous to our nature. What is the language in which she "being dead yet speaks?" What is the influence she leaves behind her? It is the same voice that comes from her home and her grave: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die:" and often and again will her evil maxims be quoted, and her wicked life appealed to, for incentives to sin, and encouragement in the works and ways of iniquity. She is dead, but the contagion of her character is alive. Her form is beneath the earth, but her voice is still heard to the extent of its sphere, and the spectre of her immorality stalks among those that were attached to her in life; and, just in proportion to the many amiabilities of her character, will be the depth and duration of the impression made by the vices of her character. Or we may pass to the higher platform, and quote the Christian minister. Let us suppose that his creed and his conduct were irreconcilable antagonists—that he preached like a seraph, and lived like a devil—that he preached so well that it was a pity he ever left the pulpit, but lived so ill that it was a pity he ever entered it. O! how destructive the sermons which he "being dead yet speaketh!" Every godless hearer he has left behind him will appeal to the doings of his deceased minister for a sort of license to his conduct, and indulgence for his sins; and the unhappy man will destroy more after his death than during his life.

Thus the departed sinner, as well as the departed saint, "being dead yet speaketh." Thus our sins as well as our virtues survive. Thus we exert a posthumous influence which adds either an impulse upon the advancing chariot of salvation, or throws stumbling-blocks and obstacles in its way. These last characters are like baleful comets that traverse our canopy for a while, leaving behind them pestilence, and plague, and mildew; or, like the fell simoons of the desert, wafting moral death and desolation to every scene which they visit. It is for these reasons that we urge every one to read the lives of illustrious martyrs, and apostles, and saints, who "being dead yet speak," in behalf of all that is holy, and honest, and of good report; and it is for this reason especially that we would warn every man, and teach every man, to be very jealous of his life and his doings, not merely on account of the present generation, but of generations yet to come, over which his influence for good or for evil may extend.

We have hitherto spoken of the influence for good or for evil which men leave behind them in the immediate circles of their friends and acquaintance; but there are other ways in which men may speak to many generations yet to come, as loudly as if they had a voice which could be heard from the rivers to the ends of the earth. I speak not of the lettered tombstone, which is the voice of many of the dead speaking, after they are gone, to the pilgrim that is wending his way to Zion; nor of monuments erected to commemorate illustrious worth; nor of legacies and bequests to the cause of religion, which make the name of the donor to be mentioned with reverence and respect after he is gone: but I speak of the almost undying influence which genius can exert by reason of that great discovery of modern times—the printing-press. The discovery of printing is the finest illustration of my text; and well may we remark in passing, that many texts which to us appear yet weak or obscure, are waiting for greater advancement in human discoveries to be brought home to us in all their weight and their fulness. By means of printing, man may speak to all kindreds and tribes, and people, and tongues, and make his voice be heard, with simultaneous

power, beyond the Atlantic waves, and upon the shores of the Caspian sea, and amid the population of Europe. Nay, he may speak to accumulating generations after his death, with all the freshness and force of personal eloquence. Printing gives to man a sort of ubiquity and eternity of being: it enables him to outwit death, and enshrine himself amid a kind of earthly immortality. It enables him to speak while yet dead. His words that breathe, and thoughts that burn, are embodied and embalmed; and with him thousands hold profitable or hurtful communion till time is no more.

If, then, we are loudly called upon to be careful what we speak, and what we do, we are doubly warned to beware what we throw into the press, and invest with a power to endure, and a strength to pass every sea, and to visit every people. Every day as it dawns is adding to the powers, and resources, and expansibilities of man: and, if every day does not also add a larger amount of moral and religious principle to regulate this growing power, then, in the end, will the human race attain a giant's strength, but have an idiot's skill to use it. Our political power is increased; our numerical, and therefore physical, power is increased; our resources are immensely increased; our skill has enabled us, by steam-navigation, to bid defiance to tide, and tempest, and time; and our improvements in printing are now so vastly multiplied, that we can give body and form to every word that falls from the lips of man, and circulate the speech that was addressed to a few auditors yesterday to the utmost ends of the globe. We therefore want much a commensurate increase of religious principle, and need more than ever to be reminded how and what we are to do. Never was the text so true as it is in the nineteenth century; never did men "being dead yet speak" so extensively, so long, and so loudly.

If any earth-born joys are admitted as visitants amid the celestial choirs, the joy that springs from having written saving and sanctifying works, is the sweetest that reaches the hearts of the saved. And I can fancy a Baxter, a Newton, a Scott, a Rutherford, rejoice with exceeding joy when the angels that minister to them that are to be heirs of salvation, bring word that, in consequence of the "Awakening Call to the Unconverted," or "the Force of Truth," or the "Letters from the Prison of Aberdeen," some sinner has been aroused from his lethargy, and made a partaker of grace, and mercy, and peace. And if, as we believe, any poignant recollections from this side "the bourne whence no traveller returns," reach the memories of the lost, not the least bitter will be the remembrance of having written volumes which are circulated by every library, and sold by every vender, in which the foundations of morality are sapped, and the youth of our world poisoned throughout the whole range of their moral economy. O! it will be the sorest sting of that worm which never dies, and the most agonizing pang of that fire which is never quenched, that their name, and their creed, and their principles after them, gather converts on earth, and carry fell desolation to homes that had otherwise been happy, and corruption to hearts that had else beat high with philanthropy and piety. To speak in many tongues and in many lands, long after they are dead, is a source of deep joy to the holy ones that are saved; and to speak in many tongues and in many lands after they are dead, is a source of the bitterest sorrow to the damned. And thus it seems to come out, that the intellectual and scientific discoveries of every day, are preparing either additional matter of deep pain to the lost, or of



intense joy to the ransomed. Knowledge is not only power for good or for evil, but it is joy or sorrow to the denizens of eternity. Often and again will the great and the wise that are in glory, wish that their pens had been more employed, and their faculties put more to the stretch; and often will the lost in hell wish, that when they wrote, their right hand had forgotten its cunning, and the sun refused them his light, and the press cast out their works still-born, and consigned them to Lethean streams.

Thus I have laid before you the mighty influence which emanates from the dead, and the many channels through which that influence may continue to flow forth upon the living, for generations yet to come. I am now anxious, as a watchman upon the walls of Zion, to improve all passing occurrences, and, among the rest at this time, the death of one who has made a deeper sensation among the religious public, than any other minister since the days of Luther and of Knox, and who being dead speaks volumes—I mean the death of the Rev. EDWARD IRVING. His name is now perished from the catalogue of the living upon earth, but found, I am sure, in the Book of the living on high. I believe he has gone to the bosom of his Father and his God, where his sincere, but grievous misapprehensions of many great truths, are for ever done away. He held, I know, the alone foundation Christ Jesus, and adorned the doctrine he professed by every christian virtue; and while the “hay, and straw, and stubble he built on it, are all consumed, he himself shall be everlastingly secure.

When I came first to this great metropolis, I found in Mr. Irving a friend when I had none besides, and in his session much spiritual and religious comfort. I was in the habit of spending many Saturday evenings along with a few ministers of England and Scotland, in meditations on the Greek Testament; and when I remember the child-like simplicity, the striking humbleness of mind, and the kind hospitality of that great and good man, I cannot but grieve at the awful eclipse under which he came, and the early tomb he has found. He is gone to the grave, I have reason to believe, with a broken heart. However much he continued to adhere to the unscriptural and enthusiastic notions he broached, he could not yet shut his eyes to the awful discoveries made concerning the conduct of some of his professedly inspired followers. Conceive men daring to declare that they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and, in virtue of their pretended inspiration, ordaining Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, and, all the while, living in the grossest violation of the ten commandments. In these things there was enough to break that good man’s heart; and if we combine with these facts the various tribunals at which he has stood—his dissociation and exile from the temple in this city, which the credit of his name had reared, and in which (as he himself most pathetically said) his babes were buried—his deposition from the office of the holy ministry in that Church, whose battles he had often fought and whose walls he dearly loved; we can see more than adequate *materiel* to bring him to the grave in the prime of manhood. He set out on the Christian ministry like some war-ship, with streaming pennants, and with majestic way: but the storms beat, and the waves arose, and prudence was driven from the helm, and, perchance, the seven spirits that are before the throne, ceased to breathe upon the sails; and battered, and tossed, and rifted, she foundered amid rocks and shoals. I left him when I conceived that he had left truth; but still, never did I cease to esteem the man, and earnestly to pray for his recovery. Is

is because "he being dead yet speaketh" more important lessons than any of the dead I have known, that I bring his character before you this day. Let me, in dependence on divine grace, enumerate a few of the lessons, "he being dead yet speaks" to the ministers and people of Christ.

First. He speaks to us strongly on *the danger that environs a lofty intellect*. No man ever possessed a mind of higher range, and a greater power of fervent and impressive oratory. None, with the exception of his illustrious father in Christ, Dr. Chalmers, was so able to arrest the attention, and gain the hearts, and mould the doings, of his audience. But it was his calamity that he knew and felt too well the greatness of his genius; and this made him fancy he could penetrate the arcana of eternity in virtue of his intellectual prowess, and gather to his bosom flowers that bloomed not for man upon earth, and make known a geography which is to be known hereafter only. Like the eagle, he soared too near the sun, and was struck blind. He was misled by sparks of his own kindling. Had he been but a retired and ordinary parish minister, how happy had it been for Edward Irving! But so it is; the strongest swimmer is first drowned, and the strongest and the foremost warrior most frequently slain.

Here is a lesson for men of great parts. It is not in this case that grace is needed in the inverse ratio of our intellectual strength. The greater our intellect is, the greater our need of grace to guide it. The strong man has most need of discretion, and the rich man of prudence. Let it be your fervent prayer, that the powers you have derived from the Creator may be encased in grace derived from Christ Jesus your Redeemer. Here also is a lesson to men of moderate talents. Envy not the lofty minds of the eloquent and the able: the higher you rise, the greater is your liability to fall. Let us remember, that David's weakness, backed by the blessing of the God of Israel, was stronger than the strength of Goliath without it. Our warfare is not with intellectual, but with spiritual arms. The only desirable gift is the grace of God.

Secondly. "He being dead yet speaketh" of *the dangers of ministerial popularity*. Never yet did obscurity destroy ministerial usefulness, but often has it been impaired and neutralized by the poison of the popular breath. He who is gone had often and again among his audience, the crowns and the coronets of the world—the wise, and the rich, and the illustrious; and the matter of wonder is, not that he should have fallen, but that he did not fall much sooner. It would be well if those, who spare no condemnatory language when they speak of him who is gone, would but think, that if they had stood in his place, their fall would have been more speedy, and more disastrous. He became giddy from the eminence to which he was raised; and after staggering awhile, he fell, a warning to all never to forget that, "by grace they stand," wherever and whatever be the niche which they occupy.

But there is an especial admonition from his tomb to *our congregations*. His people almost idolized him; they listened to *him* instead of listening to God; and therefore the Almighty taught them, by bitter experience, that man is not to receive the glory that pertains exclusively to Jehovah. O never was *minister-worship* so signally punished; and never, I trust, will the lesson cease to be remembered by generations yet to come.

Thirdly. "He being dead yet speaketh" respecting *the danger of self-sufficiency and self-confidence*. We are, by no means, prepared to assert that the

verdict of others is to determine the nature of our own decisions on the Word of the living God; and we are not prepared to assert, that any national or individual church is infallible; we must all stand or fall by what we ourselves have thought and done, not by what others have said. But when the whole voice of Christendom is lifted up against an opinion which we have cherished—when martyrs have sealed by their blood, and apostles have preached to the death, and reformers have proclaimed in every land, that one proposition is from the Scripture, and the other in direct opposition to its statements, it surely becomes a young and inexperienced divine, to doubt, to pause, to give way. Because we are not to bow to the *ipse dixit* of any, we are not therefore to reject the weight of the testimony of the wise, the holy, the ancient. The whole Church of Scotland decided, through her venerable assembly, that the views of Mr. Irving, respecting the humanity of Christ, were unscriptural; and yet he persisted in his adherence to his former statements, and pitched his own judgment against that of the most venerable, and learned, and holy fathers of the Christian Church. I do feel, that next to the Bible, we are to honour the Church. But the fact is, that the whole inspiration of the Word of God was clean at issue with those views which Mr. Irving broached respecting the humanity of Jesus. As to the claims to miraculous powers, never were claims so wild and preposterous. I defy them to produce one single instance of miraculous power. The miracles of our Lord and his Apostles were so palpable, that men never disputed their supernatural character, but declared that they were either from God or from Satan; but, in the present day, the miracles said to be wrought are such miserable failures, that the question is among themselves whether they really be miracles or not. Doubt is condemnation here. Nothing should be more satisfactory to these deluded men than the fact, that, a fortnight before the death of him to whom we allude, one of the gifted persons, speaking (as he professed) by the Spirit, prophesied that their leader would not die. What is the fact? And what is the inference? I pressed this single incident lately home to the conscience of one of the deluded people, and he told me that Jeremiah had prophesied falsehoods, and, if he erred, the prophets in Newman-street surely had license to err. So indeed they had. So infatuated are these fanatics that, rather than humble themselves to see the absurdity of their views, they will let go their belief in the inspiration of the word of the living God, and shake the very foundations of all our Christianity. May God deliver us from a spirit of self-confidence and self-sufficiency, and lead us to that happy temperament which stands neither in receiving wholesale and unexamined the opinions of men, nor in rejecting and despising them as less to be depended on than our own. Above all, let us ever feel that dependence on the Spirit of God which is our greatest strength and security.

Fourthly. "He being dead yet speaketh" respecting the *danger of leaving truth, even in the smallest degree, and preferring opinions simply because they are novel.* There is but one straight and true way, while there are a thousand false. In that way we find that the pious and the illustrious dead have walked, and found peace; and this way is so clear and well-defined that we may rest assured, whatever scintillations of truth, unobserved before, we bring to the view of men, these must be on the surface only. The great truths of the Bible were, perhaps, more distinctly seen and grasped, at the dawn of the Christian era, than in these its latter days. We may illustrate, and we may place in stronger

light, the great articles of a standing or a falling Church; but find other and hitherto undiscovered and essential truth, we never can. Take care, then, of deviating from the path of truth by an inch. If once you leave that consecrated and beaten way, you know not to what darkness and error you may eventually come. You then follow the *ignis fatuus* of human fancy, and lose the only light to the feet, and lamp to the path—you lose the thread that leads through the mazy labyrinth of human life—you start away on a wrong scent.

He who is dead, speaks powerfully on this subject. He started some wild vagaries on the millenium, and laid these down as axioms in Christian doctrine: but he stopped not here; one wild notion was hatched after another, till the unhappy author was lost in a maze of confusion and error. Had he been spared, I doubt not but that he would have retracted his errors, and returned to the good old ways of Scriptural and solid inquiry. As it is, let us learn from the dead the lesson which the Almighty has not seen meet to allow us to learn from the lips of the living—that it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the plain and the long-established ways of truth. And now, could he re-visit them whom he has led astray, O, how fervid and how earnest would be his exhortations to abandon their wild and unscriptural creed, and return to the Church of their fathers, the mother from whose breasts they first drew the sincere milk of the Word, and by whose hallowed altars they were nurtured and fed. O, let the confessed hypocrisy of some of these fanatics, and the discovered iniquity of others of them—let the mockery of miraculous power they exhibit, and the lying prophecies they utter, prove to these deluded mortals that their church is a refuge of lies, and, with a few sincere and holy exceptions, a sanctuary for hypocrisy, fanaticism, and sin.

To us, who have escaped these delusions, the dead would speak—Do not suppose that, because you have the *form* of godliness, therefore all is well: do not suppose that a sound creed is universally connected with a sanctified heart. Remember heart and life heresy is much worse than head heresy. Remember that to no purpose will you say, “Lord! Lord!” if you have not done those things which he has commanded. May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds to see the truth, and sanctify our hearts to feel and to follow it!



## THE CHRISTIAN A NEW CREATION.

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REV. H. M'NEILE, A.M.

ST. JUDE'S CHURCH, LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 19, 1834.

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"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."—2 CORINTHIANS, v. 17.

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By creation, all men are in Adam. As God created the plants and the trees of the field, each in its perfect state, in its full maturity, with its seed in itself, and has created nothing since, but all others have proceeded forth and come from the first creation—so also with man. Adam was created in the fulness and perfection of his maturity, with his seed in himself; and there has never been a man created since: all we, the rest, are from him, unfoldings from that parent bud, streams from that parent fountain. But before there were any unfoldings, the bud was blighted; before there were any streams, the fountain was poisoned. Adam offended God. When he sinned, we all sinned; for we were in him—the whole human race in him. When he offended God, we all offended God; when he incurred God's anger, so did we; when he fell under the penalty of death, so did we; when he deserved hell, so did we. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so" (argues the Apostle,)—"and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fall and corruption of the nature of every one that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." So speaks our Church, gathering her sentiments from the language of the Apostle.

Marvel not, therefore, my brethren, when we say to you, You must be born again. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" except a man be born again, he must take the curse and the ruin of Adam, and continue, throughout eternity, an enemy against God. Although he may, for a season, while he is in this world, hide from himself the misery that that enmity brings with it; although he may dissipate his thoughts for a time, and endeavour to screen himself from the consciousness of his state in the sight of God; and although he may succeed in so doing, and his treacherous memory, and his deceitful heart, and his benumbed conscience, may live careless about the God he has offended; yet he cannot continue so. The flesh supplies him, for the present, a cage wherein the bird hides itself; but that cage will be broken, and that bird must fly forth, and the eagle-eye of God must be met; and then, if the

spirit be not congenial with the character of God, misery—unspeakable, unchangeable, eternal misery, must be the irrevocable consequence.

Marvel not, therefore, brethren, if we be urgent in telling you, you must be born again. Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation. We know not what a day may bring forth. This day, this very day, hath ushered one, who worshipped with us, into eternity: this very day, while we were engaged in the worship of God here this forenoon, an immortal soul took its flight from an earthly tabernacle, and met, in nakedness, the Father of spirits. O, my brethren, marvel not if, with the urgency of true friendship, the believing urgency of Christian friendship, we tell you, with a penetrated heart, that you must be born again.

As an all-sufficient atonement was absolutely indispensable, in order that God, consistently with his character of righteousness and holiness, should accept a sinner, so an inward, a spiritual, a vital change, is indispensably necessary, in order that a sinner may be accepted of God. God in Christ presents himself for our acceptance: "Receive me," says he. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; and he hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation: so that we are now "ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God." It is not that God should be reconciled to you: we have nothing to do there; that is God's own doing; and he has done it in Jesus: but we want you to be reconciled unto him: which thing cannot be except ye be changed within you.

Now, the Apostle Paul here says, that, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"—"a new creation" is the literal translation of the text. This is a most remarkable expression, corresponding with the one I have already quoted more than once of our Lord—"born again." It marks something more than a mere reformation of outward conduct; something more than the application of the outward ordinance of baptism, as I taught you this forenoon. My brethren, this marks an inward, a spiritual change, at the very root of a sinner's being, in the depth of his heart. It is not the cleansing of the outside of the cup and the platter, but of the inward man. It is not the clearing away of the rubbish from the top of the sepulchre, that it may be whited and appear cleansed; but it is the clearing of the filth that is within. Brass may be cast into the furnace and melted; it may be cleared from dross, and polished to a most beautiful brightness; but it is still brass, and all the polishing in the world cannot change its nature, and make it gold. A sow may be washed so that not one particle of mire shall remain upon her, and let go clean; but still she is a sow, and all the washing in the world cannot change her nature that she should continue clean. A natural man may be polished by education; he may be washed by outward reformation: he may be tutored into a graceful companion, an excellent member of society, a kind friend, an affectionate parent, or husband, or brother, and all that is admirable and estimable in the sight of men: all this may be done, but still he is a natural man; and all the cultivation on the face of the earth, all the education, all the refinement, all the knowledge, all the civilization, all the acquirements in science and literature that he can heap upon him, or that the most accomplished scholars can heap upon him, cannot help him at all, or go one jot towards making him a spiritual man. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he

know them"—for this simple and comprehensive reason—"because they are spiritually discerned." It is God's prerogative to change the heart: only He that created can new create. "Behold," saith the Apostle, "all things are new," and "all things are of God."

Consider the connexion in which this text stands. St. Paul is supplying his brethren with arguments and answers to certain persons who had slandered him, and of whom he says that they "gloried in appearance, not in heart." At the twelfth verse he writes thus: "We commend not ourselves again unto you" (that is not our object) "but give you occasion to glory in our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them that glory in appearance, and not in heart." The fervent zeal of the Apostle was accused by these persons as being madness. His sobriety of mind, his judgment, his discretion, his becoming all things to all men in order that he might win some—this was accused of wily hypocrisy. Against both of these charges he here defends himself: "Whether we be beside ourselves," as they said—if we be mad there is a cause for it: if we be what the world calls mad—if our zeal assumes such a tone that men who know not the value of eternity, accuse us of being out of our reason—"if we be beside ourselves, it is to God; and if we be sober"—if we be sober—if we observe such a measuredness of conduct with our zeal in preaching, in order that men may not have real reason against us—there is a cause here given—"it is for your cause." Mark the thirteenth verse: "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us"—that is, the moving power: the love of Christ is a constraining power. My brethren, that word is a remarkable word: the original word is taken from a figure which represents leaves, and straws, and light articles of various sorts, carried down a stream, constrained to go as the water rolls; so all the affections, the desires, the plans, the objects, of the spiritual man, the minister of Christ, are described here as being "constrained" in a great torrent; and that is, the love of Jesus Christ; it "constrains" us. "Because we thus judge, that, if Christ died for all, then were all dead:" if men had not been dead in sin, they would not have required that another should die for them. "If he died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all that they who live should no longer live to themselves," (they are not their own; they are bought with a price; they should therefore no longer live to themselves as if they were their own property; they belong to another, and should live to him; they are purchased by him; they are his) "but to him who died for them, and rose again"—a living Saviour, alive from the dead, and appearing in our behalf at the right hand of God.

Now mark what follows: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." We seek the acquaintance of no man for the sake of fleshly objects; we cultivate no man in reference to advantages to be gained in this world from that man: we esteem no man because of the fleshly advantages that he possesses in the world, the enjoyments he can help us to if we cultivate his friendship: neither do we esteem any man because of the embellishments of life with which we can gratify our taste, because of the advantages which he can minister, because of the scientific knowledge he can delight us with, or because of the entertainment that he can supply in various articles, or branches of literature, or comforts in the world or in society: none of these things which belong to

the flesh, form our inducement for knowing, or admiring, or esteeming, or being attached to, or following after the countenance of any man: we are crucified to all this. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh"—what is this? It does not appear that Sau! of Tarsus had any personal acquaintance with Jesus during his residence upon the earth. Paul was an enemy of the Christian Church first—an enemy employed in violent opposition after the death, and resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. This passage, therefore, cannot be fairly understood, as referring to any personal acquaintance with Jesus in the flesh: but Paul, in common with the other pharisees, had entertained the expectation that the Messiah would confer temporal, carnal blessings upon the Jewish nation—that he would deliver them from the Roman yoke—that he could confer upon them, what the natural heart loves, worldly distinctions; not shaping their views according to the truth, in that distinction only of which this world should be the scene, and which, nevertheless, shall be truly righteous and spiritual at the second coming of the Messiah; but forming altogether carnal expectations, such expectations as would have made it rather a natural thing for men to be attached to Christ. If Christ had come to confer temporal distinction upon the Jews, to elevate them in the scale of nations, in the carnal estimation of the world, then men might have followed him without being new creatures; it would have been natural then: for honours, emoluments, distinctions, riches—these are the things which attract the natural heart. "But now," says the Apostle, "though we have known Christ after that manner, and had formed such expectations of him, nevertheless, now henceforth know we him no more as such." Instead of expecting distinctions by following him, we expect, in this world, only disgrace; instead of expecting riches we expect poverty, counting all things but nothing; instead of expecting the favour of men, and distinction amongst our own countrymen, we esteem it all but dross: all our outward privileges—Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, belonging to that stock which was esteemed the favoured nation—all these things, and all that our friends, and family, and kindred esteem—all that we once would be esteemed for, we now esteem nothing that we may win Christ; and we set forth to serve him, expecting only what is not natural for man to be pleased with. Contempt, scorn, contumely, disgrace, evil report, hardships, sufferings, perils by land, perils by water, perils among our own countrymen, perils amongst heathen—these are our expectation; yet the love of Christ constraineth us. Now, since these things are so unnatural to men, since the carnal heart revolts from it—since the man that is in Christ delights in them, takes pleasure in necessities, in reproaches, for Christ's sake—"therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:" he is not a carnal man; he is not following the natural desires of the unconverted heart; but he is a new creature, a new creation from God: "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Now, my brethren, what does this mean—*being in Christ*? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." -

First, you will observe, it plainly intimates that *all* men are not in Christ. All men are by nature in Adam, but all men are not in Christ. "If any man be in Christ:" some men are in Christ, and some are not.

*In Christ.*" The expression is very frequent in Scripture. In order to



give some, and as brief explanation as I can of this, I must remind you, first of all, that God the eternal Son took our nature, of the substance of the woman, of the race of Adam, and that he was born God and man in one Christ. There in the incarnation he became a vine whose roots were in the earth, and whose life was in heaven—the life of God in the substance of man. He became a head of a body whose members might be human—whose wisdom, righteousness, beauty, glory, immortality, were of God. In the incarnation the first step is taken: Jesus becomes the vine, the tree that human branches may be put into; he becomes the head that human members may form the body. But now observe, we have not union with him in virtue of his incarnation: this is the very root of the false theology of a certain modern school, which represents union with Jesus as a consequence of the incarnation. If that were so, all men are in Christ, and there would be no sense in the Apostle's expression, "If any man be in Christ." The bond of union with him is not the incarnation; the bond of union with him is faith; it is a spiritual union, it has a spiritual being.

This is the subject, then, my brethren,—the faith of the operation of God by the Holy Ghost in a sinner's heart, working with him through diversities of means, teaching and awakening him to some sense of his true condition, showing him what God has done in Jesus, and bringing him to Jesus, so that the man then casts himself on Christ Jesus incarnate by faith, and, in the exercise of that faith, becomes a branch of that tree, a member of that body: and as there is vegetable life in every real branch, because there is such in the root of the tree, and it is derived into the branch—and as there is animal life in every member because of its connexion with the living head—so is there spiritual life in every believer, because of his union with Jesus, who is in union with God, who is the fountain of light, and life, and blessedness, and glory.

Now, to be in Christ is, to be delivered from self-dependence, from self-direction, from self-estimation, from self-righteousness, and to be transferred into Jesus, for wisdom, and strength, and direction, and righteousness, and dependence; to be no longer our own, but to be his, and all that by faith: depending upon him simply, relying upon him without wavering, without doubting, without seeking for any voucher; but taking God at his word, in the secret satisfaction which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in the heart, that God is true, and that we are God's; the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God—"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

If any man have this change wrought in him—if any man have the Spirit of God so working in his spirit that this self-dependence, and self-direction, and self-righteousness be excluded—and not in profession only, not in word—not in the party spirit or talk of a neighbourhood or a circle, in order to gain a character for religion amongst one's neighbours—but in reality, in truth, in the secrecy of the closet, in the deeper secrecy of the heart, in the moment of alarm, in the moment of serious sickness, in the moment of anticipated death, in the moment of bitter disappointment, when the world dashes some favourite cup from our lips, and it is broken in fragments at our feet—in those moments, (when a man lives more in a month than at other times he lives in a year, because he feels that God is about him) *then* to trust in God, *then* to be quiet, to be satisfied, to be happy: my brethren, if any man trust in Christ so, he is a new creature; in every respect he is a new man.

His state, in the first place, is new IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

He has in Christ, first of all, *the perfect pardon of all his sins*. There is no condemnation; the blood of Jesus Christ hath cleansed him from all sin; Jesus hath borne that man's sin in his own body upon the tree; Jesus was made a curse instead of him; Jesus was made sin for him that he might be made the righteousness of God in him. What a mercy this is! The pardon of all his sins! all the sins that he could recollect against himself (and that would be but a small proportion); he has in Christ full and free pardon of all the sins he has committed, and that have escaped his memory, since the first outbreking of impatience against his mother when an infant upon her lap; every angry word and temper, every burst of passion with his brothers and sisters, in infancy, in youth; every secret provocation, every fraud, every falsehood; all that have escaped his own notice, and died out of his memory: he has perfect, free pardon of them all—the pardon of all his sins. This is a new feature in his case. Before he was in Christ his sins lay upon himself; out of Christ he was under sin, and it was a dead weight upon him; although he was so paralyzed, and benumbed, and stupified, and hardened, that he did not feel it. But now he is a new creature in this respect, in his state before God—that he has perfect pardon of all his sins.

My brethren, do you believe that? Do you really, in those moments I alluded to just now, believe that all your sins are pardoned—that there is no condemnation at all—that it is not a peradventure, but a certainty, that God hath pardoned your sins, and that Jesus Christ hath borne your iniquity, and there remains nothing, not a jot of it, for yourselves to bear? O, the blessing is so full, it is so large, so abundant, so god-like, that men can scarcely believe it: indeed, it is only God that can give you faith in it; it is only the Holy Ghost in you that can believe what God the Son has done for you, and the way that God the Father looks upon you: the whole blessing is so of God, that (I repeat) only God in a man can enable him to believe what God has done for the man.

But besides this perfect pardon of all his sins, the man in Christ has *perfect righteousness*. He is justified in Christ Jesus from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." What is "the end of the law?" Perfect obedience, love—to love God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. This is what Christ did all his life long; and that perfect conformity to the law in which Christ lived is accounted to every believer in Christ as if he had done it himself. So that, if any man be in Christ he has this new feature in his state—that perfect righteousness is his, made over to him freely; and God beholds him as if he was, from the first moment of his existence, a perfect fulfiller of the holy law of God. In this respect God looks upon every believer as he looks upon Christ: not as he did look upon him when he was upon earth; for then he was a sin-bearer, and the wrath of God was manifested against him, and it pleased the Father to bruise him: but he looks upon the believer as he looks upon Christ *now*, he having finished that work; and the delight of God in every believer is of the same kind with his delight in his own soul: he is well pleased in Christ, and, for Christ's righteousness' sake, he is well pleased with all that are in Christ. If any man be in Christ, God is as well pleased with him as he is with Christ himself. He

is well pleased with obedience to his own law; and this perfect obedience is given to every believer. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

This leads to what I have already just intimated—that the believer in Christ possesses the *favour, the friendship, the communion of God*. In God's favour is light. The sinner has indeed a favour from God. There is a love of compassion towards the wicked: "God so loved the world that he gave his dear Son." But there is another love towards the members of Christ, which is, the love of complacency, that God delights in them. It is the complacency (as it has been expressed) of Jehovah contemplating Deity; God looks with such delight upon the work of his own hands, his new creation in Christ Jesus.

This describes something of the change that has taken place in the believer's state in the sight of God. Instead of lying in sin, instead of being in condemnation, and under deserved wrath—though an object of compassion he is in a new condition; perfectly pardoned, justified, and holy; delighted in with a love of complacency.

As he is a new creature in the sight of God, so he is a new creature **IN HIS OWN CHARACTER**—as to his views, as to his feelings, and as to his conduct.

He is a new creature as to *his views*, as regards their effect upon his *own character*. My brethren, the natural man has but little knowledge, and correspondently low thoughts of God; and he has little knowledge, and correspondently high thoughts of himself. The less a man knows of God, the less he thinks of him; and the less he knows of himself the more highly he thinks of himself: and, on the other hand, the more a man knows of God, the more highly he thinks of God; and the more he knows of himself, the more lowly he thinks of himself. Now, the unconverted man is ignorant both of God and himself; and it is a charge brought against him, as you will find it written in the fiftieth Psalm, that he supposes God to be altogether such a one as himself. But if any man be in Christ he has totally new views on this subject. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into his heart, to give him the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Beautifully is this exhibited in the history of Job. In the midst of all his patience, there was much of self-ignorance, and much of ignorance of God, and much of consequent remaining self-righteousness in what Job said. You remember how he maintained his integrity. "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." And he maintained this tone against all that his friends could say; but when God spake to him out of the whirlwind—when God called to him, and said "Gird up now thy loins like a man: I will demand of thee, and answer thou unto me. Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?"—then Job fell upon his face; and he cried, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now

mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." So, brethren, it is with the converted man: whatever his moral excellences of character may be—whatever his comparative position in society, whatever estimation he may have gained for his qualities as a natural man, and the cultivation of them in all the decencies and all the tendernesses of domestic and relative life—whatever men may think of him, and whatever he may think of himself—as soon as he discovers a glimpse of the glory of God, as soon as he sees that awakening light in which the smallest stain of sin appears as the blackness of hell—then, my brethren, whatever his character may be in the sight of God, he becomes loathsome in his own sight; and just at the moment that he becomes all beautiful in the sight of God, he becomes all evil in his own estimation; just as he is entering into Jesus, as he is approaching the light in which he shall shine as a member of Christ throughout eternity—as he is approaching that light, and entering into that glory, he discovers his own darkness, and vileness, and nothingness; and he lies prostrate with his hand upon his mouth, and his mouth in the dust, as he enters into the blessedness and the glory of God.

This, beloved brethren, is a great branch of our subject. Here is the true place of repentance. Repentance is not an act of man which he is to perform in his own strength, and in the meritoriousness of which he comes to claim assistance from God. Repentance is a gift from God; (let us pray to him to grant us true repentance;) repentance is a gift bestowed in the manifestation of the spiritual glory of God, in shewing a man God's character, in shewing him his majesty, by the secret teachings of the Holy Ghost. The contrast between the discovered glory of God, and the discovery of the vileness of man, is the source of true repentance: and it is in recurring to this very point, it is as we reach glimpses of that glory, that we regain a penitent state of heart throughout our Christian pilgrimage.

Neither is it in this respect only that the man is a new creature who is in Christ Jesus: but he has new views of *Jesus*. What an unworthy view the unconverted man takes of Christ; how unlike the truth; how cold, how carnal, how selfish! He is willing to have some recourse to Christ because, after all, he feels some deficiency in himself, and he is willing to have recourse to Jesus to make it up; that after he has done, as he says sometimes, what he knew, but, as he acknowledges at other times, not what he might, he wishes to secure safety for himself, and therefore he is willing to have some little regard to what Christ has done; and he hopes that, for his sake, God will be merciful to him. But he looks to Christ only as a selfish rescue for him—just an escape from wrath, at the very best. He never rises into love for Jesus—never into assurance of *his* love to him; this he condemns as enthusiasm. O how unworthy—O, how disastrous, the views that the natural man has of Jesus! The love of Christ does not constrain him; no, the love of the world constrains him: and he is willing to have recourse to Christ just to keep him out of hell; that is all—just to keep him out of eternal fire; and if he can escape out of that, he cares for nothing else: selfishness is the root of all his pretensions to religion.

But if any man be in Christ—if any man have these views of the glory of God, and of his own condition—then his views of Jesus are altered. He sees in him just what he requires—seeing the immense distance between himself and



God, seeing the amazing majesty of the Almighty, and his own utter ruin. What can fill the gap? What can stand in the distance? What can unite him to God, beaten down as he is under a sense of sin, and looking up to that glory—that bright, and brilliant, and holy glory which he has discovered in Jehovah? What can stop the gap? What can fill the immense abyss? Where is the object that can make that man meet that God? Jesus, God and man; Jesus, full of the tenderness of human compassion for the prostrate sinner—full of the majesty of Jehovah for the glory of his Father; Jesus is just what we want. Then the man sees that, only for this, he would be beaten down into absolute wretchedness, into despair and death. A view of the majesty of God, without one corresponding view of Jesus, would beat a sinner down to despair and ruin. But with trembling transport the man looks to Jesus, to Gethsemane, to Calvary. There, on that bended head—there, on that anguished bosom—there, in that piercing cry—there, in that deadly agony—there is my hope, there my assurance that God will receive me into his own bosom. There I find just what my necessities need; and God can demand no more—I can require no more; God is satisfied, and my heart is satisfied. O my Lord, my Life, my gracious Saviour, my Rock, the Horn of my Salvation, and my High Tower! the love of Christ constrains me.

Now, my dear brethren, this is what it is to be in Christ Jesus: and the man that is not in Christ Jesus is in Adam, and is on the brink of being in hell fire.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, not only with regard to the views he takes of his own character, and the views he takes of Jesus, but in his *feelings* and *desires* also in other respects, and in his *conduct*. The man has experienced, further, deadness to the world. He sees that the world is lying in wickedness; he sees that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; that if any man will be a friend of the world he is an enemy of God: and therefore he concludes with the Apostle, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” He is crucified to the wickednesses of the world; he has no heart for them: he cannot sit in the seat of the scornful: he recoils from the ways of the ungodly: he walketh not in the company of sinners: there is something revolting about it to him; there is something in him which is offended by it: the seed of God is in him, and he cannot walk in the way of sinners; he cannot live in sin, because he is born of God.

He is careful to avoid a prevailing attachment even to the lawful pursuits of the world. You heard this night in our second lesson, that they who are Christ’s “have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”—even the natural affections, which in themselves are lawful, are brought into a state of subjugation in the truly Christian man; so that his chief affection, his constraining affection, the master-key that touches every tone of his character, and makes all vibrate in harmony with God, is, the love of Christ. It is not the love of money, it is not the love of distinction, it is not the love of fame, it is not the love of his brother, or his sister, or his father, or his mother, or his child. O great God! grant thy people this crucifixion of the flesh more and more, that our prevailing affections, our constraining motives, may, in all things, be the love of Jesus.

This the Christian has; but the degree that he desires he has not: this is what he pants after; this is what he prays to have increased; this is what he

wishes ; this is what he reads for ; this is what he hears for ; this is what he joins in Christian fellowship and communion for—seeking more and more to be “ filled with all the fulness of God.” This is much deeper than what men generally call good works ; this is making the tree good that the fruit may be good. That was an admirable saying of Luther, and well in accordance with his Master’s saying—“ Good works do not make a good man, but a good man makes good works. Make the man good, and the works will be good ; or else, if you leave the man evil, his works will be evil, though they may have a good outside upon them.” “ Give me your *heart*,” says God. If the heart be not changed, all the good works outside are but the paint upon the harlot’s cheek.

If any man be in Christ, he has *new resolutions, and new determinations for God*. Now brethren, the natural man sometimes resolves against sin ; the natural man sometimes resolves against some particular sin which has alarmed him, which has awakened his conscience, which has made him uneasy ; and he determines not to commit that sin again. But the Christian man’s resolve is *universal* ; it extends not to that sin, or this sin, which has caused temporary alarm, but to all sin, as hateful to God ; and his resolution is, to keep all the commandments of God ; and his language is, in truth and honesty, “ I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right ; and I hate every false way.” And as his resolutions are thus universal, so they are also *immediate*. The unconverted man sometimes resolves, frequently indeed, to be better, but not yet : he postpones it to a more convenient season : he desires to have more enjoyment of the flesh : and then, but not before, he will turn. How most striking is that history of the celebrated St. Augustine, who records of himself this confession—that, under the convictions of his conscience, he prayed to God to convert him, but *not yet*. He had the awful audacity to enter into such a bargain with God as to ask him to convert him, but *not yet*, because (he said) he knew after his conversion he must break off his sins, and he loved them so much that he wished to enjoy them a little longer : and he had the humility to confess it, and to hand it down to posterity. But the man that is in Christ has his resolutions immediate, as well as universal ; and he desires, from this present moment, without yielding again, even once, to the indulgence of evil passions—from this very moment his heart’s desire and prayer before God is, never, never to sin again.

If any man be in Christ, *his apprehensions respecting sin are altered*. The unconverted man’s apprehension regards detection ; he is afraid of being found out : but the Christian’s apprehensions regard the sin itself. He fears the sin because it is opposed to God ; and therefore he distrusts himself ; he is unwilling to trust himself in the way of temptation, knowing his own weakness ; and instead of being willing to plead the strength of temptation as an excuse for the commission, he turns it into a fresh accusation against himself that he ran into the way of temptation : so jealous is he against himself for God.

And his resolutions, further, are new in this respect—that, whereas they were formerly made in his own strength, and, being made in his own strength, were broken through that very recurrence of the temptation—*now* they are made in the strength of the Lord. He distrusts himself altogether ; he knows that left to himself for a moment, he would fall into utter ruin ; and his language is,

Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. Keep thou my footsteps, and they will not slide." This keeps him prayerful, watchful, humble.

Time would fail me to expand this character over the details of his outward conduct. I can but just say, that if any man be in Christ, all his occupations are new to him, although they may wear the same aspect in his neighbour's eyes: he may travel through the same details of business; he may be engaged in the same transactions of domestic life; but all are newly done—new in their motives, and new in their object. They are now consecrated to God: they are done as God's appointment, for him, and not for his own amusement, or for his own aggrandizement in the world: they are done in obedience to God; they become part of his religion, instead of being snares to him and drawing him away from his religion. The universal view that he takes of God's providence—the liberty that he has in Jesus to use all the creatures of God that are good, when they are used for God's glory and sanctified by his word and prayer—this enlarges his view: he sees that a man may be as truly a Christian upon 'Change as upon his knees; that a man may be as truly a Christian crossing the sea in a merchant vessel, as in reading his Bible in his own room. All these things are of God, and all are consecrated in the Christian's view; he believes them all to be of divine appointment: and so even the very drudgeries of life become means of grace. Union with Jesus supplies him with a better than the feeble power of him who could turn all he touched into gold: the Christian has received from God a consecrated, legitimate, and spiritual power, which turns all he handles into spiritual life and health for himself in the service of his God.

Beloved brethren, ask your own souls how this description accords with your characters, with your experience, with your pursuits, with your views of the world. Ask yourselves whether, if you take this view of things, you would sneer at the enthusiasm of true religion; whether, if you took this view of things, you would haunt the scenes of intemperate amusement with which this world abounds; whether, in your hours of recreation, you would show the tendency of your heart, by yielding to even the idle pursuits, to the mere embellishments of life, or to the amusements that are provided so continually by the time-wasting works that imaginative dispositions are ever producing, racking their ingenuity to provide inventions of dissipation—if you would cultivate *them*; whether you would make it their interest to provide such things, or whether you would not forbear, that they might feel their occupation gone, as regards yourselves, you being dead to them, crucified with Christ from the rudiments of the world, even to a holy walk with God.

But I must forbear. The blessing of God be amongst you, and sanctify all your doings, and all your engagements, through this coming week, and enable us to meet again in this place in holy love. Grace, mercy, and truth, be multiplied to you, and every one amongst you.





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